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*Frontispiece.*

IN THE SHADE OF THE BIG PARAISO

# Men, Manners & Morals in South America

BY

J. O. P. BLAND

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTORY

HAVING regard to the present parlous price of paper and to the patience of much-suffering readers, the perpetration of yet another book on South America might appear at the outset to call for some explanation, if not for apology. The list of books published under this heading in recent years is indeed so formidable that the world may well be weary of it. From the library catalogue point of view, the subject might well seem to have been exhausted, every part of the continent having been ransacked and described, all its words and works recorded. Yet, how few there be amongst all these works (as some of us know to our cost) that properly and worthily inculcate the profitable exercise of travel, or that appeal to and justify the wandering instinct of rational man! Say what you will, the great majority of them are so dreadfully infected with stodgy commercialism, so monumentally useful, that their general effect upon the mind (unless it be the mind of a bagman) can only be compared to a surfeit of suet pudding. Here and there only, *rari nantes*, amidst all these dreary volumes, will you find the sort of company for which the Lord of Montaigne looked (alas, how oft in vain!) in all his journeyings—that "rare chance and seld-seene fortune, but of exceeding solace and inestimable worth," to wit, "an honest man, of singular experience, of a sound judgment and of manners conformable to yours, which company a man must seek with discretion and with great heed obtaine, before he wander from home," ay, even in

the spirit. I make no claim, in this desultory narrative of uneventful journeys, to provide company of that rare refreshing kind; but at least I hope to follow modestly and, if it may be, profitably, in the path of that prince of travellers, of him who believed that there is "no better school to fashion a man's life than incessantly to propose unto him the diversities of so many other men's lives, customs, humours and fantasies, and make him talk or apprehend one so perpetual variety of our nature's shapes or formes."

A strange thing, surely, this modern obsession for encyclopædic information about trade and manufactures, this all-pervading blue-book stodginess of statistics, which permeate the works compiled by laboriously travelling politicians, economists and globe-trotters, concerning lands which (could they but discern them rightly) afford matter for philosophical speculation at every turn of the road or river. It is only another proof, I suppose, of the lamentable truth, that one of the chief results of our vaunted civilisation, of all our labour-saving and man-killing devices, is to deaden the mind of man to the things that matter, to deprive us of those spiritual activities and adventures that are the proper business of life, and to destroy our perception of relative values. How else shall we account for the fact that, with the exception of one or two naturalists like Waterton and Hudson, or wandering word-artists like Cunninghame Graham and Knight, all those who have written, and are writing about South America, seem to be completely obsessed by the commercial and industrial possibilities of the country? I am not referring, mark you, to the works written by hungry hacks to the order of South American politicians and financiers, of those magnificently bound volumes which confront you in hotel lounges and steamer saloons (the

ground bait used by company promoters and Ministers of Finance to attract capital), that read for all the world like prospectuses for investors, and deserve to be treated as such. I am speaking of the standard works of reputable men, even men of high degree, like Lord Bryce, who went there to learn, or M. Clémenceau, who went there to lecture, not to mention the lesser fry of honest journalists and *bona fide* travellers. All alike seem to revel in compiling soporific statistics of marketable products, in recording the increase of whizzing machinery and the building of railways and grain elevators, just as if the entire population of these delectable lands lived and had their being for the sole purpose of producing pabulum and raw materials to feed our feverish industrialism. How drearily great the host of writers who have gone steadily from one end of the continent to the other, faithfully describing the present and potential resources of each Republic, singing pæans of praise to the "productivity of capital," as if Brazil and Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, had been created and developed solely so that congested Europe might draw from them sustenance and absolution for its economic and social sins! Throughout all their dismal pages, you hear no sound of laughter, no echo of the Gaucho's guitar, nor any of the songs of Old Spain that have lingered melodiously in the pampas since the days of the Conquistadores. These scribes deal not with the humanities, make no attempt to look beneath the surface of men's lives, to tell us of the things that are eternally important, of the way of a ship upon the sea, or the way of a serpent on the rock and the way of a man with a maid. And yet man in South America, even though he descend not to the mental state of an amalgamated Engineer, is just as worthy of study as he is elsewhere; to regard him solely as a wheat-producing, cattle-raising

machine is merely to proclaim that, because of life, we ourselves have lost the secret and art of living. What we should ask travellers to tell us is not what the country produces *per capita*—there will always be official automata in Government offices to compile these fearful records—but how the native lives, what are the rational purposes of his existence, what his dreams, and the subjects of his noontide speculation.

It is not as if these countries did not provide plenty of fresh and fruitful subjects for speculation and much matter for our learning. Agassiz and Humboldt are there to prove the contrary, to show that a traveller may be concerned with things profitable to commerce and yet remain alive to the humanities. Here, as in the Old World, the stones have their profitable sermons and the running brooks their books. Here, he that has eyes to see and ears to hear, may contemplate mankind in the making, may look forward and descry this continent, veritable heir presumptive of the ages, gathering unto itself the wealth and the culture of Europe. Here one may stand and watch, from the strangers' gallery, many interesting phases of the human comedy—the curious and yet eminently logical results of the working out of Europe's political and social nostrums, transplanted to soils for which they were never intended. Here one may see to what base uses the worldly wisdom of Rousseau and Mill, of Lloyd George and Jaurès, may be converted when applied to races essentially incapable (in their present stage) of representative self-government. One may see, as in a moving picture, the modification and fusion of ancient European types—Spanish, Basque, Portuguese and Italian—slowly but surely yielding to climatic conditions and intermarriage. A journey up the Paraná river is as interesting in this respect as the journey from

Moscow eastwards by the Siberian Railway, through those regions where East and West meet and insensibly merge.

In these days of universal upheaval, the traveller interested in political systems may contemplate in South America the triumphant emergence of the Græco-Latin ideal and the ignominious eclipse of Germany's pinchbeck and poisonous Kultur; also he may observe the struggles of that exotic growth "Pan-Americanism," a Washington State Department dream, foredoomed for all its vividness to futility in lands where the soul of the people holds firmly to the Latin ideal. He may study the growth of socialism in the great cities which live by the labour of the unsophisticated "camp." Or he may observe the development of party politics, with all the tricks of that evil trade, and the systematic exploiting of productive industry by an unusually attractive, but none the less pernicious, type of demagogue.

But above all these, in perennial interest and value, there is the son of the soil, the man in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, of Buenos Aires and Montevideo, the peon of the camp, the light-hearted, hard-working, philosophical *hijo del pais!* Speaking without prejudice, and from experience based chiefly on observation of the natives of Uruguay and Argentina, I should say that the peon of South America, like his social equivalents in China and Japan, has a keener appreciation of the things that make life worth living, a more philosophical perception of relative values, than a Manchester mechanic or a Glasgow riveter. He certainly has preserved, far better than the denizens of our drained and paved ant-heaps, a more abiding sense of the wonder and mystery of existence and of the "glory of the universe." He does not need to kill time: he "makes" it (to use his own word), and when the day's work is done, or even while he is doing it, he can

take a disinterested and genuine delight in simple things. He knows something of the *joie de vivre* and of the love of beauty for beauty's sake. Even as a Japanese craftsman, he brings a measure of æsthetic enjoyment to his daily task and can manifest its spirit in the work of his hands.

Therefore, it seems to me, that despite the crowded state of our bookshelves, there may be justification and room for a book that shall endeavour to speak of men and things in South America from the human, rather than the commercial, point of view. For the great host of travellers who shall hereafter make their way, either for business or edification, to the lands of the Surplus Loaf, it is surely advisable that every ship's library should contain at least one book about these lands, that a man may read without being reminded of his investments. To tell the truth, our ships' libraries very seldom contain anything new or interesting about the countries to which they carry us. Even those of the Royal Mail give the impression of having been selected, towards the close of the Victorian era, by a cautious purser with one watchful eye on the Company's purse and the other on Mrs. Grundy. The bulk of the collection is usually in English, and consists of samples of Scott, Dickens, and other respectable classics, supported by modern stalwarts of the Rider Haggard, Conan Doyle, Hall Caine, Wells, Marie Corelli kind, and a few sea-dogs, such as Clark Russell and Bullen. French literature is generally represented by Bourget, Daudet, Erckmann-Chatrian and Pierre Loti, with Flaubert and de Maupassant discreetly thrown in, as a concession to the literary taste of the *jeunesse dorée* and *viellesse rouée* of Rio and Buenos Aires. Then there are a few Spanish and Portuguese volumes of the harmless romantic kind, calculated to give no cause for alarm to anxious mothers

of convent-bred flappers; and for the rest, one or two of the stodgy books aforesaid—Koebel or Foster Fraser on the Argentine—and a miscellaneous lot of decorative works of the propagandist ground-bait order, supplied gratuitously by Ministries of Finance or other Government Departments of malice aforethought.

I suppose all this is so because Corporations, even when they deal with those who go down to the sea in ships, really have no souls, and, like the War Office, cannot be expected to have them. If such a thing as a Shipping Company's soul could manifest itself in Leadenhall Street, it could hardly fail to perceive that the best way to encourage travel would be to nourish the wayfarer's mind, while yet they are in the way with him, upon such literary fare as should stimulate the romantic adventurous spirit of *wanderlust;* to attune it to the tutelary influences of these new lands and cities, which only yesterday (as time goes) were as remote from us as if they belonged to another planet, and to-day bid fair to rival those of the Old World. Your German shipping companies will use their library, of course, as they use everything else, to sow the insidious seeds of poisonous Kultur, taking every advantage of the fact that he who reads aboard ship is not in a position to run; but on English boats the catalogue reminds one of a jumble-sale lot at a suburban bazaar. As a matter of fact, it represents no process of selection or mental struggle on the part of any of the ship's company; for I am told that the builders provide them, *en bloc,* as an item in the general specification. Two hundred books (assorted) for bookcase in social hall, one parcel music for piano, ditto; six dozen cushions, one dozen miscellaneous parlour games, and there you are; who could ask more in the matter of comfort for body and soul, on a journey through turquoise seas beneath the Southern Cross? And yet, as

I have looked down the promenade deck of the good ship *Araguaya* or the *Avon*, rolling down to Rio, and marked the intellectual fare provided for the post-prandial edification of the deck-chair recumbents, how often have I longed to write to Lord Inchcape, or whoever it is that reviews the progress of the Company at its annual meetings, and tell him what an excellent opportunity they are missing. Never was there a time and place on this feverish planet so suited to the inculcation of the art and philosophy of travel, as this unbroken spell of sunlit days and star-spangled nights, this oasis of silence and blue sea, beyond which lies infinity. There should be on every ship that makes these voyages, a " Travellers' Joy " library, selected with care and understanding, consisting of books written by men who knew that there are things far more important in a journey than one's destination; the *Odyssey* should be there, and Montaigne, Agassiz and Waterton, and of the present generation books like Belloc's *Path to Rome*, Knight's *Cruise of the Falcon*, and Graham's *Vanished Arcadia*, with Sterne and Stevenson, Barrie and Locke; so that a passenger, even though he be a financier, might haply hear a new spirit-stirring message in the song of the south wind, and dream dreams more profitable to his soul than are any that are bred of preference stock or canned beef. Thus might he come to the shores of the New World, as Pizarro and Cortes came and all the splendid dreamers of old Spain, with a fitting sense of wonder and a proper spirit of adventure.

The ultimate objective of the three journeys around and about which the present vagabond narrative is compiled, is a certain Uruguayan *estancia*, a place of flocks and herds, lying far from the haunts of men in the province of Soriano, somewhere betwixt and between the slumbering old " camp " towns of Mercedes and Dolores.

These journeys were made in the years of strife 1915, 1916 and 1919; but before and beyond their concern with the pastoral affairs of that remote sequestered spot, they included certain digressions into odd corners of Southern Brazil, Paraguay and the Chaco Austral of Argentina; also they comprised polite visits to such cities as lay by the way, with certain subsidiary purposes of propaganda therein, intended to foil the insidious plots and stratagems of the Hun. This last business provided opportunities for studying the then neutral attitude of South America from more than one interesting point of view, and of gauging some of the probable results of the war, upon men and affairs in that continent. But fear not, patient reader, this is not going to be an addition to the mountainous growth of war literature. It may contain some brief exposition (clearly labelled, that they who read may run) of South American politics in the melting-pot; but as to the opinions of politicians and trade prophets, concerning either the world at large or their own sordid affairs, I promise you that there shall be as little as possible. As times go, it has not been possible to write of anything under the sun without reference to the four years' convulsion of Europe, because go where you will, even in the remotest wilds, its results confront you at every step, in a hundred ways. Of these things, of the reverberation of the great struggle, its effects on the bodies and souls of men at the other side of the world, there must needs be some occasion to speak. But the *estancia* in Uruguay is our ultimate object, the *pièce de résistance*, of this writing—the rest may be regarded as *hors d'œuvre*—and the whole thing is in reality only a pretext (publishers insist on these things) for discursive speculation on the world in general and the moods and manners of South America in particular.

Also be it understood at the outset, I make no claim to speak with special knowledge of these lands, or as one having authority. These casual impressions and reflections by the wayside are not of the kind that are likely to help any man to embark on the business of cattle raising or coffee growing; suffice it if they help him, when once his cattle are sold or his coffee picked, to think and talk about something that, in his haste or his absorption, he may have overlooked; something other than the virtues and vices of horses and the price of commodities. I am well aware that there is a certain type of *estanciero*, the good old crusty, forty-year-in-the-country resident, who regards it as unqualified impertinence that any tenderfoot *gringo* should venture to discuss, or even to pretend to understand, the life and affairs of the " camp." To him I would observe, with all the respect due to ancient institutions, that it may sometimes be vouchsafed to any person of average intelligence, who has travelled and studied life, to perceive truths that are hidden, by reason of their very nearness and familiarity, from the wisest of permanent fixtures. To tell the truth, experience in many parts of the world, East and West, has taught me to admire the oldest resident, but to distrust his judgments of the country of his adoption and particularly his opinion of its people. Even his faculty for observation may frequently become atrophied by long disuse and by the routine nature of his mental exercises; his mind, that once was a sensitive plant (even as yours or mine) may have been over-exposed, so that familiar phenomena make little or no impression upon it. Amongst themselves, *estancieros* and other acclimatised residents recognise and profess to deplore the existence of this state of mind in their midst. Nevertheless, your really good conservative specimen infinitely prefers this state to the critical

condition of mind which asks the why and wherefore of things, and which may occasionally be led to the conclusion that all is not for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Of which things, more in due season.

The impressions of a new-comer have at least the virtue of being clear-cut and vivid, and if he happen to possess sufficient experience of human affairs and institutions in other parts of the world to enable him to draw valid comparisons and conclusions, it may be (who knows?) that in the long run, his activities may prove as useful as the garnered wealth of an inarticulate wisdom which has forgotten the existence of most things beyond its immediate horizon. The thing is conceivable. In any case, disregarding the warnings of old crusty, let us go blindly forward. Half the world, they say, does not know how the other half lives, nor does it care. It is the business of the peripatetic observer, howsoever foolish, to remind Peru of China's existence, and vice versa.

At least I may claim to have dealt faithfully with men and things, by the light of such faculties as Heaven has vouchsafed me; wherever possible, I have gathered the crumbs that fall from the table of local wisdom. The result gives no consecutive record of travel deliberately planned to establish either facts or theories; at the same time, the description of life on the "camp" in Uruguay, closely studied on the spot for half a year, assumes to be something more than a casual impression. A *gringo*, unless to the manner born, may not be able in that time to pick the scabby sheep from out of a moving flock; he may not be able to recite the two-and-thirty names under which that noble animal, the horse, figures eternally in "camp" conversation, and by which his colour, qualities and vices are distinguished. But he must be a poor

traveller and singularly lacking in curiosity and observation if he has not gathered useful materials for the comparative study of beasts and man, and picked up by the wayside trifles that may serve either to adorn a tale or point a dozen morals.

## CHAPTER II

### OUTWARD BOUND

THERE are several pleasant ways of getting to the eastern coast of South America. For those who, in normal times of peace, would approach it in a leisurely mood, conducive to the appreciation of lands wherein time has been relegated to its proper insignificance, I would suggest starting through Russia, crossing Asia by the Trans-Siberian Railway, thence via Peking and Shanghai to Japan; from Yokohama either direct or via San Francisco, to Santiago de Chile, and thence across the Andes to the Argentine. Thus travelling, through lands that have seen many an Empire rise and fall, many an outworn creed perish in oblivion, ay, many a race utterly wiped out in the fierce struggle for a place in the sun, one may come to civilisation's latest playground and storehouse with a fitting sense of the mystery of existence and the effect of time, climate and religion on the destinies of mankind. After contemplating the revolutionary chaos that has overthrown Imperial Russia, the departed glory that once was far Cathay, the swift spreading of the Empire of the Rising Sun, now aspiring to overlordship in the East and the equally stupendous growth of "God's own country," the traveller must needs come to these lotus lands of the South with something approaching to a philosophical conception of the riddle of the universe and a tolerant attitude towards the state of mind of the Spanish-American, who declares that sufficient unto the day is the good and the evil thereof. To come into this atmosphere of *mañana*,

of *mas ó menos*, straight from the feverish hustle and bustle of New York or London, is to impose too severe a strain upon the average man's capacity for rapid adaptability; one should approach it with such mental preparation as may lead to sympathetic consideration for the peon's outlook on life. As a philosophy, it is probably just as good as that of Wall Street, even when it asserts that nothing really matters except love and war and reasonable intervals for laughter and sleep. And then, gazing across the Gulf of Time, behind this present-day background of easy-going prosperity, behind this vision of a promised land, flowing with milk and honey, the traveller who has heard and understood the teaching of old Europe and Asia may see these lands, these great silent places, as they were before Babylon was, cradles and graves of nations, that, like those of Persia and Babylon, Egypt and Parthia, have gone the way to dusty death and left scarcely a sign of their passing. He may hear the distant footsteps of the hungry generations that have trodden one another down and vanished utterly. Approached in this spirit, Peru, Bolivia, even Brazil and the Argentine, become moving figures in the great shadow-play of human history, more instructive than if we attempt to interpret them by the fierce light of their newspapers or the wind-borne words of their politicians. We shall get nearer to the heart of things by accepting the wisdom of the peon and its conclusion, namely, that because of the brevity of his tenure, and the uncertainty of his end, man is not justified in taking himself too seriously, either as an individual or a race; that to have lived, to have known laughter and love, to have done the day's work without haunting fears for the morrow, is enough. Which wisdom is rarely vouchsafed to editors, politicians and other word-ridden, restless shadows.

But pending the passing of the Bolshevik, and thereafter for those who have not leisure or inclination for this round-the-world approach, there is another way of getting to South America which combines economy of time and money with a pleasant and profitable process of initiation, namely, the overland route from Paris to Lisbon. It is indeed difficult to understand the minds and manners of men in Brazil, unless one has learned something of Portugal; the big unruly child resembles its parent more closely than any of the Spanish Republics resemble Spain. Under proper guidance, a week in Lisbon and Oporto will serve to give even a complete stranger some insight into things which, seen from England through the medium of Reuter's politico-journalese, are always a puzzle, and frequently an irritant, to the uninitiated. Lisbon, home of a noisy and unstable proletariat, is not Portugal by any means; to understand how and why the nation has been able to survive as an independent State and to preserve something of its ancient dignity, one must go north to the valley of the Douro and beyond and see the thrifty laborious peasantry and *gallegos* at work. All through the country, the hand of the politician lies heavily upon productive industry of every kind; ignorance and poverty testify to the chronic misrule of a bureaucracy given over to word-warfare and *la politique de l'estomac*; yet four centuries of this misrule have not succeeded in breaking the stout heart of these rugged toilers or in quenching their native spark of cheerful fortitude. Portuguese officialdom has lived since the seventeenth century upon the labour of these peasants, both in the homeland and in Brazil; the provincial *caciques*, Lisbon lobbyists, and other bureaucratic parasites are all alike faithful to the aristocratic tradition that bids them neither toil nor spin. Lisbon lives in imagination upon the glories of her golden age of epic deeds, upon the con-

quests and discoveries of Vasco da Gama and Albuquerque, but since the French Revolution, her actual life has become a sordid struggle between the haves and the have-nots, and her destinies have been at the mercy of political agitators and adventurers, of anarchists and terrorists, of dreamers who preach the gospel of Bolshevism in the sacred name of liberty. The Republic which, according to its founders, was to restore the glorious traditions of Portugal and to inaugurate a new era of prosperity, has proved that the pet theories of political dreamers, applied to an undisciplined and highly emotional people, cannot give them the rare and refreshing fruit of their hearts' desire. The germs of revolution are ever in the air; conspiracies of Royalists, Freemasons, Carbonarios, of the army and navy, are endemic—and amidst all their tumult and shouting, the "toil-worn craftsman, with earth-made implements, laboriously conquers the earth," sending forth his sturdy progeny to the new world overseas, from which they also will remit part of the price of their labour for the maintenance of tax-gatherers and word-spinners in the old country.

The history of Portugal, and the present condition of the country, afford many and fruitful object-lessons for the guidance of Jacobins. The most obvious of them all is that nations, like individuals, can stand adversity better than prosperity, and that wealth, when easily acquired by plunder, brings its own swift Nemesis. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the gold and treasures that were poured into Portugal from Brazil made her the envy of Christendom. At the time of the Napoleonic invasion, the nation had been living on this unearned increment so long, that the idea of honest work had become thoroughly distasteful to any man with social pretensions; and the body politic had therefore become completely demoralised.

To-day the man in the street has come to expect his daily bread and bull-fight as the price of his vote, and to conspire against any Government which cannot pay that price. Moreover, another result of the law of retribution confronts us, writ plain in the features and morals of the people, namely, the infusion of negro and Brazil-Indian blood which came, through bond-servants and slaves, with the plundered wealth of the New World. It is to the negro strain, with its indiscipline, its fatalism and incapacity for initiative, that Portugal (and, in like manner, Brazil) owes many of her social and economic afflictions. Even under the old Burgundian dynasty, the Moorish and Jewish ingredients of the nation had never fused with the semi-oriental stock of Lusitania sufficiently to give the nation solid stability. The importation of the negro strain saddled it with a weight that cannot be shifted for centuries. At the present day, half of the soil of Portugal is uncultivated, three-quarters of her people illiterate, and her cities are become stamping-grounds for the wild asses of visionary politics. Yet for all that it is a good land and fruitful, the muscles and sinews of the people are healthy. All it wants (like Russia, China and other victims of misrule) is a period of progressive education under strict discipline. There are Portuguese in the north, worthy men who lament the expulsion of the religious orders and the befooling of Demos, who will tell you that the people was never so happily prosperous as during the ten years when Wellington's army upheld law and order in the land.

It may seem to the reader that here, at the very outset of our wanderings, he is getting an intolerable amount of political dough and very little sack. But we are going to Brazil, and I repeat, in extenuation, that unless one has studied mankind in the making in Portugal, it is no

possible to form a correct judgment of men and events in that greater Portugal overseas. There, as you shall see, the qualities and defects of the transplanted race have persisted, bearing much fruit, some good, some bad, in the prolific soil of their new habitat.

There were other reasons, besides a desire for enlightenment, to commend the overland trip to Lisbon, in war-time. In the first place you avoided all the nervous strain of anticipating a torpedo attack anywhere and everywhere from Liverpool to Leixoes, not to mention the strain of the Bay of Biscay on the centre of all human emotions. Then, too, you saw Paris, and to see Paris after three years of war was a liberal education in philosophy and courage of the highest, because the most intelligent, order. It was my good fortune to visit the French capital several times during the war—the first time was just after the Government had migrated to Bordeaux—and each time I left it with what Americans call a sense of "uplift," with renewed confidence in human nature and a moral certainty that France and civilisation were going to consign the German's shining armour to its proper place in the world's Chamber of Horrors. "France is dying," said Hindenburg in 1917. I heard that message in Paris, and took it with me to the Place de la Concorde, where the statue of Strasbourg, still decked with the wreaths of a great nation's mourning, was awaiting the day of redemption, all confident, surrounded by her peers. "France is dying," said the idol of the Huns. The lie was good enough to keep the Berliner in good humour, but the German had not our advantage of seeing Paris, sore stricken but serene and splendid, in the sunlight of that autumn day.

Then by the overland route you get little glimpses of Spain—not very satisfactory to new-comers, but to those

who know and love this land of idleness made perfect by a race of artists, like the wayside greetings of old friends. There are two main roads for reaching Lisbon from the French frontier, one by Irun—Medina del Campo—Villa Formosa, the other via Hendaye to Madrid (Wagons-lits service) and thence to Lisbon by the so-called " Rapide," direct. In summer both routes are extremely dusty and stuffy. But from your carriage window you can see, with the eye of faith, the Knight of the Rueful Countenance and his trusty squire faring forth in their immortal quest of chivalry. You can see agriculture as it was by the sources of Time, bullock-carts of the type men used in Egypt ages ago and use in Manchuria to-day; women gleaning in the fields as Esther gleaned, and everywhere glad sunlight, and snatches of half-forgotten songs.

At Lisbon, before embarking on the Royal Mail, and even more emphatically on returning to Portugal, one learned in war-time something of the possibilities of local bureaucratic formalities, when combined with those of diplomatic routine, as effective checks on anything like unseemly haste; the education thus acquired is valuable anywhere between the Isthmus of Panama and the Straits of Magellan. To get one's passport stamped by the Gobernador Civil and the French Legation, for example, was a splendid test of philosophic calm; there were others, provided by the Government's official launch service, which monopolised the carrying of passengers to and from vessels lying in the Tagus, by the Health Officer who boarded you next morning because his wife was ill last night, and by the Servicio da Republica, Policia Administrativa, which undertook to carry one's luggage expeditiously from the wharf to the Avenida Palace Hotel—about 800 yards—and took half a day to do it. It needed but little experience of these official monopolies to confirm

one's faith in Cobden and the virtue of private competition. To remonstrate with anything in Portugal that wears gold lace and brass buttons is futile: you might as well argue with a penny-in-the-slot machine. Then, too, there were chronic dislocations of labour, due to the frequency of national festivals, to the inscrutable workings of the *repos hebdomadaire* and to strikes, whereby your ship was prevented from coaling or discharging cargo—many inventions, in fact, for persuading the traveller that to-morrow will do just as well as to-day, and that it is not seemly to look upon Lisbon as no better than a jumping-off place. Take your time, Senhores: what matters a day more or less in a lifetime, especially when all the world is upside down? Saunter down the Via Aurea, on the shady side, and learn how man may be completely idle and yet well satisfied. Sip your vermouth at the cafés of the Rocio and read the latest exposition of Affonso Costa's plan for establishing the millennium on the principle of the widow's cruse. Or take leisurely trips to Cintra and Bussaco and the sleepy old towns of the northern coast and learn how contentedly men may dream their little lives away, a stone's throw from the hurly-burly of your machine-made modernity, yet worlds apart.

This may not have been the idea at the back of the mind of Lisbon's officialdom—perhaps it does not entertain ideas—but it was the impression that one got from it. Take the case of the Gobernador Civil and the stamping of passports. Let us say that you landed at Lisbon from South America in the evening, and wanted to take the express via Madrid, leaving next day at 4.55 p.m. The Civil Governor's office bore a legend to the effect that it was open from 10 to 4. So it was, but the janitor (weary, because he had explained it for years and years) informed you that His Excellency never arrived till 11.30 and usually

at twelve. You employed part of the interval in a voyage of discovery to find the place, some streets away, where they sold you the stamps which the Civil Governor's office would presently affix; only the uninitiated would expect to find them in that office, said the tired clerk, who relieved the tedium of your subsequent waiting with a careful enumeration of the various formalities to be observed. The *visé* at the French Legation was a serious matter, unless you were an old hand at the game and carried a stock of photographs suitable for pasting on to passports, for they required you to deposit two copies in the archives. (Why is it, by the way, that passport photographs, all the world over, make you look like a criminal *in posse?*) It usually took two days to get your papers passed by the French Legation and they charged you two and a half milreis (roughly seven shillings) for the privilege, which, judging by the number of applicants, must have gone some way towards paying the expenses of the establishment. No doubt the object of all this was to make war-time travelling difficult and unpleasant; but to the unofficial mind it would have seemed simpler and better for all concerned to check it, by refusing to issue passports in the first instance, except for approved purposes. The purposes once approved, why harass the traveller with clinging coils of red tape and regulations that merely reflected the vacillations and vagaries of the official mind?

In June 1915, when I passed through Lisbon to join the good ship *Avon*, the city was recovering from its latest Revolution, busy also with demonstrations—these people are born demonstrators—in favour of the Allies, with processions, much firing of loud bombs, and a great flow of oratory. The Revolution had been more serious, in the matter of bloodshed, than that which relegated King Manoel to the seclusion of Twickenham; not because the

political ends in view were more fiercely contested, but because arms were freely distributed at the naval barracks to all good patriots, and many applicants of the baser sort secured them for purposes quite unconnected with politics, to wit, for the sniping of over-zealous policemen or the settling of private feuds. There was an aftermath of nervous unrest in the air; prudent politicians were seeking to divert attention from home affairs by stimulating public resentment against Germany and by preparations for Portugal's entry into the war. Amidst all this excitement, the German merchant ships lay calmly at their moorings, some thirty-five of them; a goodly fleet in idleness, a menace or an invitation, according to the point of view. On Sundays, the German colony were wont to use them in turn as picnic resorts, eating up their stores and drinking their wines to the glory of the Fatherland—a continual offence, this, to those who foresaw the day when Portugal would seize these ships and find their cupboards bare.

When next I passed through Lisbon, in March 1916, Germany had declared war against Portugal for violations of neutrality, and the Republic was taking itself very seriously as a belligerent. The German ships, all effectively damaged by their crews, had been taken over by the Portuguese Government; no longer were Hans and Fritz to be seen, of a fine morning, hanging out their wash on the rigging. Down by the river's bank, where King Joseph's Black Horse stands majestically surrounded by Government offices, there was much running to and fro of important persons with portfolios, and groups of citizens were gathered in the colonnades, endlessly discussing the fortunes of war with much gesticulation. But beyond the square, which is the gathering place of professional and amateur statesmen, the tide of life flowed in its usual

leisurely channels. The morning air was fragrant with the roses and violets of the flower-sellers, elderly citizens and nursemaids were placidly taking the sun on the benches of the palm-clad Avenida; women, carrying large flat baskets filled with silvery shining fish, were going their daily rounds, and everywhere, as usual, the raucous cries of the newspaper sellers and the hawkers of lottery tickets rose shrill, dominating even the clamour of wheeled traffic on the cobble stones and the ceaseless clanging of the tram-car bells. Somehow, it was not easy to persuade oneself that this furthermost corner of the Continent had been drawn into the maelstrom of man-killing; that these easy-going and (for all their revolutions) peaceful people would soon be contributing their quota of victims to the insatiable holocaust in far-off Flanders.

But the good ship *Araguaya* (one of the splendid Royal Mail ships then still unrequisitioned for transport work) has arrived on time from Liverpool, and lies yonder on the dancing waters a mile down the river, flying the Blue Peter. And so, for a season, farewell to Europe and her armed camps. For a little while, the burden of her strife lingers with us aboard ship, by reason of the absence of lights and volunteer watches kept by the passengers on the look-out for submarines. Also we have a business-like gun in the stern and handy men to work it, and one notices that the ship's stewards are no longer the smart young fellows of a year ago, whilst the band (thank goodness !) has dwindled visibly. But after Madeira, as we pass out into the limitless horizons of the unchanging seas, we forget much of the significance of these things; the world towards which we are heading is the world we have always known, pleasantly proceeding with its peaceful affairs in comfortable security. As one looks out from the bows, gently rising to an invisible swell, where the flying

fishes break from the blue in flurried shoals, all the hellish havoc of war behind us seems a monstrous, incredible nightmare. Next morning the ship's gazette brings us faint echoes of Armageddon, voiceless messages mysteriously gathered out of the darkness by the Marconi magician; we hear of children slain in their beds in London or Paris by German airmen, new horrors perpetrated on the defenceless civilians of ravaged Belgium; but the vision of these things becomes remote, unbelievable, almost fantastic, amidst the unbroken peace of these halcyon days, when the south wind comes soft as a caress and the velvety rhythm of the ship's way sings its gentle lullaby unceasing. Never before have the great silences of these pathless waters, the serene glimpses of the moon, brought such a sense of calm, security and restfulness. Yet all the time behind this sense, there lurks an uneasy feeling of compunction, almost of shame, that life should be so comfortable and free from care whilst, over yonder, our bravest and best "go to their graves like beds."

There were not many passengers in war-time; none of the usual crowd of rich Brazilians and Argentinos returning with new wardrobes, and purple memories of *la vie galante* in Paris and London; after the war began, the native-born *estanciero* was shut off from his happy hunting-grounds. A few travellers on business, mostly British, a few women going out to join their husbands in Buenos Aires, an Irishman and his family returning to their sugar factory in the wilderness of the Gran Chaco, an English girl on her way to marry a man in Pernambuco, in response to an advertisement in a matrimonial paper; half a dozen more or less mysterious gentlemen travelling on Government business for the Allies; a number of artists of the operatic and light comedy stage, without whom no ship's company for South America is ever complete, and a few

other ladies of the kind one subsequently sees in purple and fine raiment at the gambling tables of Guarujá or Pocitos; but nothing like the gay flock of birds of paradise that migrate to the lands of the prolific *peso* in piping times of peace. Some forty or fifty passengers perhaps all told in the first class, not enough to fill more than half the seats in the dining saloon; but still quite enough to provide material for the usual board-ship romances and comedies and gossip for the smoke-room.

Two days after leaving Lisbon, Madeira. As we made the harbour, a British cruiser passed out, to patrol the traffic highway of the St. Vincent route. A goodly and a grateful sight was the white ensign on these seas, from which the German flag had been swept utterly. But the German spy, of various breeds and brands, still lurked around and about us, his activities directed to the sinking of ships by means of clockwork bombs and other typical Hun methods of war, and to the collection of information concerning the movements of allied shipping homeward bound. These activities were responsible for precautions aboard ship at every harbour on our route; all gangways were closely guarded, landing permits *de rigueur*, and the motley collection of touts, fruit-sellers and miscellaneous traders, that used to invade the ship, compelled to do their business from bumboats with the aid of baskets and boat-hooks. The ship's barber-shop trade, heretofore no small item in the Company's business, suffered severely from these restrictions; no longer might the élite at ports of call—notably in Brazil—come aboard by dozens to replenish their wardrobes and defraud their country's revenues, by wholesale purchases of duty-free soap and scent, lingerie and other luxuries. A very interesting and instructive business it used to be, this free-trading aboard of ships from Europe by thrifty citizens of high-

tariff countries. At certain protectionist ports (*e. g.* Santos) the Customs authorities, backed by local dealers, found its effect on their revenues so serious that they required the barber's shop to be closed during the vessel's stay in harbour; but enterprising members of the crew usually had their private ventures and regular clients at such places, and the game was well worth the candle, even when Customs' tide-waiters and watchers had to be liberally rewarded for assuming an absent-minded interest in things beyond the horizon. I have known worthy citizens of Pernambuco and Bahia to make down-coast trips for the sole purpose of doing a day's quiet business with the barber's shop, and to profess themselves well satisfied with the results of their enterprise.

On my way home from Buenos Aires, aboard the *Araguaya* in 1915, I noticed that the assistant barber, borne on the ship's papers as a Swede, spoke English with an accent more suggestive of Berlin than of Stockholm. He was a sleek and shiny creature, talkative and ingratiating after the manner of barbers, much given to discussing the war, and effusively hostile to Germany; a sociable fellow withal, and a man of many friends and much business ashore, even at uninteresting places such as St. Vincent. In harbour I observed that he was always hanging about the deck, and the oily furtiveness of the fellow was suggestive of unpleasant possibilities. Giving him the benefit of all possible doubts, it seemed absurd to harbour a dubious alien of this kind in our midst; better, surely, if no British barbers were available, that half the ship's company should grow beards. But I was assured, with all the happy insouciance which characterises British methods in such cases, that the fellow was really all right, well known in Liverpool, got an English wife and all that. His case had been very

carefully investigated and there wasn't a chance of hi being a German spy. So be it. But on going for my shave the first day out after leaving Lisbon in the same ship six months later, I missed the fellow's ferret face and oily tongue, and on inquiry ascertained that the unimpeachable Swede had turned out to be a German, and a highly paid spy in the regular service of the German Government to boot. He had done two years' good work for the Fatherland aboard this hospitable British ship but eventually the nature of his mole work was discovered and he got nine months' hard labour, because, grown overbold with impunity, he had omitted to allow for a possible increase of vigilance on the part of our naval Intelligence Staff and Censorship. There may be something magnificent in our insular indifference to the activities of doubtful aliens, but it certainly is not conducive to success in war. How many British ships, one wonders, how many British sailors, paid the penalty of our easy-going confidence in that slim *soi-disant* Swede?

At Madeira there were four German ships, all of which had been effectively destroyed as to their engines by their crews so soon as they got wind of their impending seizure by the Portuguese. The neatness and despatch with which the Germans disabled their merchant shipping in the nick of time whenever neutral countries decided to join the Allies (except in China, where we managed to get ahead of them) testify to the thoroughness with which their secret agents worked in places ostensibly cut off from all communication with the Fatherland.

As one looks down the terrace on the hill over Funchal and the harbour, one of earth's fairest scenes, one can scarcely help regretting that we did not accept the guardianship of this beautiful island when Portugal was ready and willing—not so long ago—that it should become a

British possession. One needs but little imagination to realise what might be made of it, what an ideal place of refuge for sunshine seekers, honeymooners and other dreamers. As it is, the semi-tropical slumbrous charm of Madeira, the beauty of its luxuriant hills and wooded heights, the old-world semi-oriental quality of its inhabitants, linger in the memory with a distinct and peculiar fragrance. It is one of those places through which the traveller passes regretfully, to which he resolves to return, "some day," a place of which to dream wistful dreams, amidst the grey monotony of our machine-made civilisation.

Most of us have some such island of refuge in our mind's eye (I have ear-marked several myself in the inland sea of Japan, in the south seas, and up the Puget Sound), restful, lotus-eating spots, where you might get a mail once a month, just to remind you of the distant hurly-burly, where you would live in a bungalow looking out to the sea, catch your fish for dinner and gather the kindly fruits of the earth. Of course, the thing wouldn't work; your house of dreams would leak, and there are no plumbers in Paradise. We are too late for allotments in Arcadia, we who have eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. All the same, if, after the war, the income-tax in England goes to ten shillings in the pound, as some predict, or if Ramsay Macdonald, Smillie and their friends are able to put their Bolshevik principles into practice, it seems to me that places like Madeira are likely to attract a considerable number of permanent exiles from the British Isles. If the accepted definition of liberty, equality and fraternity comes to be, as our Snowdens and Outhwaites would have it—liberty, the licence of undisciplined mob rule; equality, conferring one and the same dignity of citizenship on a senior wrangler and a fuddled bar loafer; fraternity, a

brotherhood for purposes of plunder, inspired by class hatred—then, merry England, a long farewell!

The Funchal funicular railway carries you up, through vineyards and gardens and sugar-cane plantations, to the top of the hill; in the town itself you can have your choice of locomotion between an automobile and a bullock-sleigh, the latter a nice leisurely conveyance that meanders bumpily through the narrow streets and stops of its own accord at the shops where tourists are expected to buy lace and wickerwork. Coming down from the hill you hire the same sort of conveyance (minus the bullocks) which is used as a toboggan, the path being constructed so as to make a glissade; two elderly natives guide and check its descent, calling on you and the Madonna to bear witness to their perspiring energy, their poverty and the duty of generosity incumbent upon wealthy travellers. The machine stops at certain points, ostensibly for the men to take breath, but more obviously to afford opportunities of baksheesh to the swarms of beggars, touts, and other birds of prey that here lie in wait. Children emerging from ambuscades bombard you with faded flowers, clamouring for coin; photo sellers thrust their wares upon you at every corner; this in a land where an honest day's work should feed a family for a week. Beggars are an inevitable product of Portuguese administration and economics, just as they are in Ireland. The subsistence, with comparative success, of a social class which habitually declines either to toil or spin, may be partly due to the semi-religious conception of charity, which leads people to believe they are laying up treasure in heaven by bestowing largesse on scrofulous loafers; but the root of the matter is laziness, laziness of the giver, as much as of the receiver, of largesse. If only donations were occasionally made in the form of soap or a ticket of admission to the

nearest hospital, the streets of this enchanted isle would smell far sweeter.

From Madeira, southwards, along the bulging coast of Africa, through the tropic of Cancer, down to the Cape Verde islands, the sea is like a shining disc of molten metal, shimmering in the heat wafted on a faint easterly breeze from the Sahara desert. Tweeds and stiff collars have disappeared, replaced by flannels and soft raiment; little *affaires de cœur*, tentative and unsettled until now, take on a serious complexion. After dusk, cosy coigns of vantage on the boat deck testify to the rapid growth of love's young (or old) dream; beneath the glimpses of the crescent horned moon, romance weaves her magic web, in blissful anticipation of seven lotus-eating days, seven tropic nights to come before the enchantment shall be broken by contact with the world of painful realities. In the smoking-room, bridge fours establish a prescriptive right to favourite corners; the leading members of an Italian opera troupe, who rise at mid-day and conduct flirtations of bewildering promiscuity till dinner-time, have organised a sort of family poker party, in which stern business and glad-eyed sentiment are curiously blended. The young Frenchwoman of attractive appearance who shares a *cabin de luxe* with an elderly Brazilian millionaire, and who made her first pallid appearance on deck at Madeira, now emerges resplendent in the latest confections of the Rue de la Paix, to sip champagne and munch chocolates in a long chair. She mixes not with the vulgar; her cabin emits a pungent fragrance, suggestive of wholesale business at Morny's, and she and her cavalier have a table for two in the far corner of the dining saloon; but other passengers for Rio, who profess to know all about her prosperous partner, hasten to enlighten you with savoury details of a typical *chronique scandaleuse*,

and to narrate the lamentable experiences of the lady's predecessors.

Before reaching St. Vincent, that melancholy jumping-off place and telegraph station where a little cluster of white men's houses crouch in the heat of the sweltering sands, with the great barrier of barren rocks behind them, one of those indefatigably bustling persons who always emerge on such voyages, had organised a perfect orgy of deck and parlour games and roped in nearly every one on board—every one, in fact, except the Brazilian love-bird and his mate aforesaid, and another little French lady, lawful spouse of a Rio magnate, who had learned to assuage the pangs of exile with opium, smoked *à la Chinoise*. The energetic gentleman on this occasion was an Italian (we will call him Pozzi) who was pleased to describe himself as a supernumerary secretary of (shall we say?) the Bohemian Legation at Rio. A dapper little man, somewhat loud of voice and familiar of manner, who picked his teeth at meal-times with something more than South American thoroughness, but otherwise a very paragon of sociable activity, and a born leader of functions. By common consent of the smoke-room, and upon his own initiative, Signor Pozzi was elected to be Chairman of the Sports Committee. In that capacity, he organised a Fancy Dress Ball, deck sports of every description, lotteries and concerts; there was no gainsaying the mercurial cheeriness of the man. I found him one morning playing draughts in the second-class quarters with the Italian barber—for all his masterfulness, his was evidently a companionable soul—and he had with him a strangely silent mysterious Italian "niece," a dark girl of the peasant or shopkeeper class, of whom he seemed to be somewhat nervous. The smoking-room came in time to have lurking doubts about the Chairman of the Sports Committee,

especially after the Fancy Dress Ball, on which occasion he gave a display that suggested undue familiarity with the midnight manners of the Moulin Rouge, and after a British Secretary of Legation had disclosed the fact that the name of Pozzi did not figure in the directory of the Diplomatic Body at Rio. Nevertheless, until the social evening which closed the list of his activities after leaving Bahia, and until the approaching end of his journey cast a certain veil of thoughtfulness upon him, Pozzi continued to be the life and soul of gaiety aboard.

But there is a sequel to this tale of a glad knight-errant, and it may as well be told here. A week after landing at Rio, I was invited by the representative of Bohemia, an old friend of mine, to spend a day or two with him at his charming summer residence at Petropolis, the restful retreat and fashionable centre in which diplomacy in Brazil takes refuge from the sordid commercialism of the capital. I arrived at his palm-shaded villa one evening towards sunset, and who should open the door at my ringing but Pozzi—Pozzi, wearing the black coat and white tie of ceremonial occasions and a somewhat shamefaced expression.

"Hallo, Pozzi," said I. "How are you? Didn't know I was going to meet you here. Is His Excellency in?"

"Yes, sir," said Pozzi. "Will you wear dinner dress or a smoking-jacket? Dinner is at 7.30."

The fellow was quite cool and collected. He seemed to assume that I would respect smoking-room confidences and betray no ill-bred surprise at discovering the ex-chairman of the Sports Committee in the major-domo of the Bohemian Legation. Without the quiver of an eyelid he unpacked my bag and prepared my bath; neither of us referred again to the *Araguaya* or the mysterious niece, or to any of the social amenities wherein he had moved

with such distinction and success. He played his pa with all the sad dignity of Monsieur Beaucaire, *renvers* All the same, the strain must have told upon his nerve for at dinner my host, apologising for the service, explaine that his major-domo had hurt his hand and couldn't wa at table. I saw no more of Signor Pozzi at Petropoli but later on, walking one day in the Avenida Branco a Rio, I caught sight of him and the niece, both fashionabl attired, taking the air in a hired victoria. And later stil at São Paulo, I met an English lady who had travelled fror Lisbon to Rio with him three years before, when, as sh said, he had been the life and soul of the ship, only, on tha occasion, his niece had auburn hair. A gay dog, I fear was Pozzi, and a bit of a blade. But all the world's a stage, and who shall blame him if his soaring soul, escaping now and then from the fetters of butlerdom, prompted him to strut and ruffle it awhile among his so-called betters, to play the Admirable Crichton and revel in his masquerade? Not I, for one. He certainly did more to enliven the voyage of the *Araguaya* than most of us, and he achieved at least one memorable flirtation with an Argentine lady, reputed as of eighteen-carat dignity in her own circle.

Five days of the "mild, lightsome, temperate and warm" Atlantic, as old Hakluyt has it, bring us from St. Vincent to Pernambuco, our first port of call in Brazil—five days of sunshine and summer seas, five nights of starlight splendour. Life has its golden hours of many kinds, hours that memory enshrines in the innermost chamber of her treasure-house; imperishable moments in which the soul has won brief freedom from the trammels of its time-garment and heard the choir invisible at the very portals of the infinite. The golden hours that remain with us unto the end, trailing clouds of glory to the very banks of

Styx, are generally not of our premeditation, or even of our selection; not we for ourselves, but Memory, on some mysterious system of her own, selects for us these deathless flowers from the garden of our swift-fading days, whose fragrance, as the sunset draws near, inspires the " sessions of sweet silent thought." How many of our red-letter days, days of triumphs in love and war, of hopes fulfilled, have faded swiftly into the formless past; days that, at the time, seemed to us above all memorable, when we felt inclined, like Joshua, to bid the sun stand still, that we might rejoice in the attainment of the heart's desire. Yet these have gone from us, while those that linger are hours that came of themselves, often unbidden, imperfectly realised, hours in which the touch of a magic hand, the notes of an echoing song, have searched out the very depths of our being, out of the world of littleness into harmony with the infinite wonder and mystery of existence. I know of no time or place on this restless whizzing planet in which a man is more likely to find secret bread for memory's storehouse than the bows of a ship, making its way, beneath the thousand eyes of night, towards the great unknown, where sky and ocean meet. The south-east trade wind moving softly over the great waters, sings to the rigging its song of far-off frozen wastes; the phosphorescent sea, gleaming like sheets of metal in our wake, is a thing of mystery and beauty unspeakable; above our heads, from the uttermost depths of space, comes the message of innumerable worlds. At last we are on the way to the never-never land; yonder beyond the horizon, we shall find the gates of gold.

Pernambuco, as one sees it from the anchorage, is hardly suggestive of the City Beautiful. It is indeed rather a dismal introduction to the new world of our dreams, a mouldy, melancholy spot, with an unsavoury reputation

for yellow fever, bubonic plague, syphilis and other unpleasant diseases. The inner harbour, with a depth of twenty feet, lies between the shore and a curious natural reef of stone, parallel thereto, very safe and snug; its entrance guarded by a fort built on the reef. The town, whose real name, almost forgotten by foreigners, is Recife, stands on the sandy beach of a lagoon delta where two rivers meet, with the hill of Olinda rising five miles to the north-west; behind it, the wooded hills merge gradually into the flat-topped *chapadas* of the *sertao* region. As to its internal condition, the town does not seem to have forgotten much, or learned anything worth mentioning, in regard to public sanitation or æsthetics, since Waterton saw it in 1816; it still gives the impression that "every one has built his house entirely for himself, and deprived public convenience of the little claim she had a right to put in."

"The lamentable want of cleanliness," the mouldy and neglected appearance of many houses, which he deplored, are still in evidence; but the surrounding country is very green and restful to the traveller's eye, and one feels, with that gentle critic, that "had art and judgment contributed their portion to its natural advantages, Pernambuco at this day would have been a stately ornament to the coast of Brazil." As it is, the coast of Brazil is an ornament to Pernambuco. But the damp heat of the tropics is pleasantly tempered by the fresh south-east trade winds, and the voice of romance, the ghosts of many a great adventure of older days, still whisper at dusk in the shadow of the palms. Is not the Governor's palace built on the foundations of a great house built by Maurice of Nassau? The Dutch took Recife in 1620—they took most places in their day—and before then the city had been rich enough to attract the attention of a roving English privateer, James

Lancaster, who captured and plundered it very thoroughly in 1595.

The *Araguaya* rides to the never-ceasing swell a mile or so from the shore; half a dozen of our passengers are landed by means of a swinging "cage," which dumps them into a lighter alongside. Amongst these is the young woman bent on marriage to the man she has never seen; there was no sign of him in the offing, but this did not prevent the courageous lady from going ashore in full bridal array; she was evidently taking no chances. In return for her, Pernambuco gave us many strange-looking fruits. The mangoes were the best of them, but, compared to the Manila variety, a poor thing. As we steamed away at sunset, my thoughts were of the enterprising bride—did she find her swain, and, if not, what was the end of that story?

Here, as at Bahia, thirty hours' journey down the coast, we took in a goodly number of Brazileros for Rio, fearful and wonderful *ménages*, whose features and raiment bore eloquent witness to the Black Man's revenge on Portugal's once-conquering race. There were stout matrons, like brood hens, shepherding swarms of swarthy infants, who spent most of their time rummaging and bargaining in the barber's shop. There were Brazilian nuts, oiled and curled like the Assyrian bull, laying in new stocks of English flannels, umbrellas and scent. The Brazilians' penchant for scent amounts to a passion; upon their coming aboard, all the perfumes of Arabia contended for mastery in the social hall, and even in the smoking-room the fragrance of Havana and bird's-eye was smothered by patchouli, verbena and *fleur d'amour*. There is nothing subtle or instinctive about it, as there is in the Oriental's use of sandalwood, musk and myrrh, nothing even elemental or racy of the soil. The thing is obviously exotic, like the

local cult of French novels of the decadent type; the race's sense of smell seems to have gone on a perpetual "jag," that nothing but the strongest excitement can satisfy.

Bahia de Todos os Santos looks more attractive from the sea than Pernambuco; there is more life and movement of shipping, and the harbour works, under construction by a French company, testify to local enterprise. But in 1915 and 1916, in fact until the United States' declaration of war against Germany in April 1917, there was not much cause for satisfaction, as far as Englishmen were concerned, in Bahia's commercial activities. The trail of the German was over them all. The policy of the Governor of Bahia was unmistakably guided by the insidious influences of German propaganda, substantially backed by German money, and materially assisted by the flabby ineptitude which even after two years of war characterised the proceedings of our own Foreign Office and Board of Trade in the matter of enemy trading. The Brazilian Federal Government's attitude of prudent neutrality, like that of Argentina, was natural enough under the circumstances. If the United States remained aloof from the war, if Great Britain and her Allies lacked the intelligence and initiative required to prevent Germany from obtaining vast supplies of food and raw materials, Brazil could scarcely be expected to refrain from taking advantage of the situation to supplement her diminished revenues, nor could the Federal Government at Rio be expected to deal severely with the Governors of States like Bahia, which thought fit to interpret neutrality in the way their German friends wanted it. Every Englishman on the coast was perfectly well aware of the ultimate destination of the huge shipments of cocoa and coffee that left Bahia, ostensibly for the United States and Sweden, every week; the regular

steamer traffic between Brazil and Scandinavia was a constant subject of jubilation to the German colonies in Brazil and a source of impotent wrath to the British cruiser patrols on the coast.

The Germans at Bahia had a firm grip of the machinery of trade in 1916; even when no shipping facilities were available they bought up large stocks of goods, partly because their astute merchants at Hamburg and Bremen regarded Brazilian coffee and Argentine wool as a better investment than the German mark, and partly to convince Brazil that it would pay her not to break with such an open-handed customer. It was only after the institution of the Allies' Black List, and when it became clear that North America would soon be in the fray, that facilities for German commerce overseas came to the end which, but for the inexplicable obstinacy of our lawyer politicians, would have overtaken it early in 1915.

There were several German ships interned at Bahia, and the place was alive with truculent Teutons and more than dubious aliens. All cargo and luggage coming aboard the *Araguaya* was very carefully searched. Only a little while before, one of Germany's semi-official exponents of Kultur had succeeded in smuggling a clockwork bomb on board the s.s. *Tennyson*, packed in a case of photo films consigned to New York. The bomb was timed to explode on the fourth day, in order to fulfil the Luxburg idea of " sinking without trace " and far from land; by a fortunate accident, however, the ship was detained for three days at Bahia, so that the explosion took place just as she was nearing Pernambuco, and she was able to make the harbour in a damaged condition.

The heavy swell that never ceases at Bahia, combined with the defective tug and lighter arrangements of the

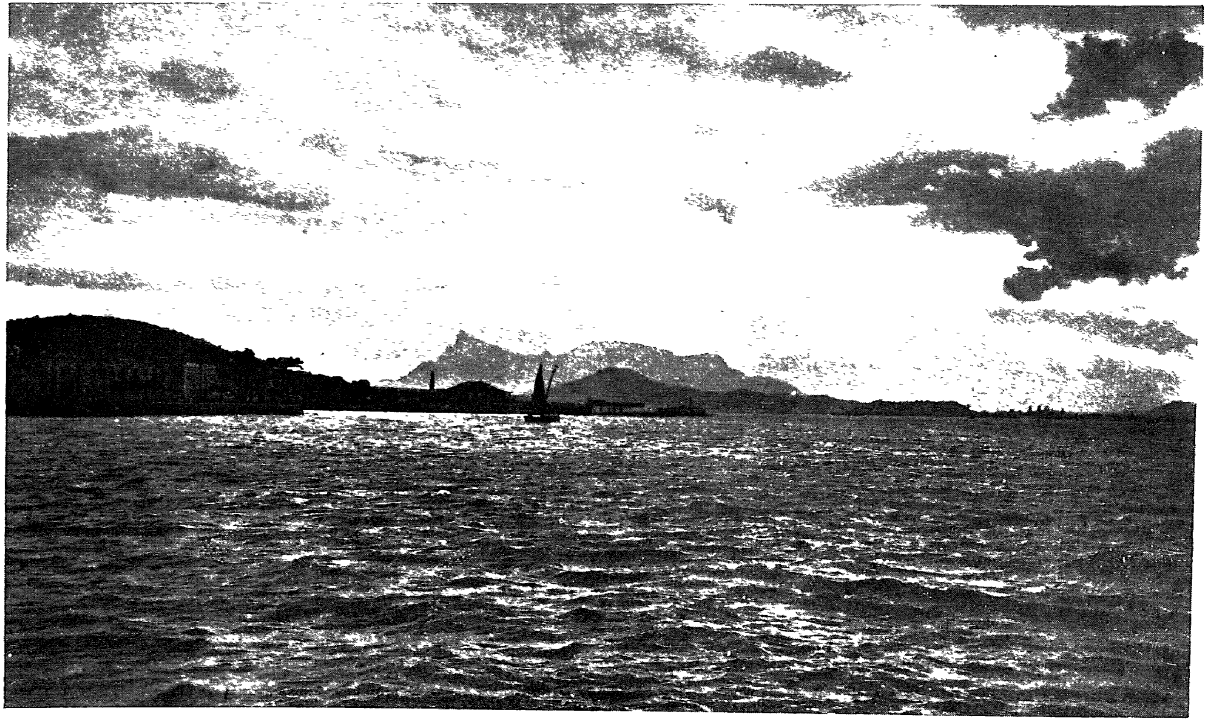
harbour authorities, make the working of cargo no easy matter. On the night we left, a sudden squall coming up from the north, three unwieldy lighters, laden with cocoa, broke away from the ship's side, and, having no tug in attendance, went drifting hopelessly shorewards with much shouting—which was the last we saw of them. Local officialdom, *more suo*, was less concerned with the safety and smooth working of shipping than with the building of the new boulevard-promenade from the town to the lighthouse at the end of the bay.

From Bahia we roll down to Rio, the north wind pursuing us with the hot breath of the equator most of the way. The ship seems to have absorbed something of the flavour of decaying tropical vegetation which exudes from these shores, where the swamp-fed jungle comes down to the verge of the sea; there is a listlessness, a sort of sentimental drowsiness in the air, distinct from the usual feeling of suspense induced by the imminence of sad, or glad, farewells. After dinner, a sentimental young woman from São Paulo, who has done a good deal of overtime by moonlight on the boat-deck, sings Tosti's "Good-bye," as if she meant every word of it, and the social hall simply oozes sentiment. Only the members of the opera troupe, long inured to such things, are impervious to the subtle influence of the hour; their eternal game of "chips that pass in the night" goes steadily on.

. . . . . .

There is yet another, and a very pleasant, way of going to South America, namely, by one of the "V" boats of the Lamport and Holt Line, that roll down from New York through the tropics and the Caribbean Antilles. As a rule, these vessels only make two stops on the voyage to Buenos Aires, viz. at Barbados and Rio de Janeiro. They travel at a dignified fourteen knots, and do the

trip in twenty-one leisurely days. For those who love the tropic seas and dream-fed days of pampered idleness, no journey could offer greater attractions. From personal experience (1919) I can recommend the good ship *Vestris* as a thoroughly comfortable and well-conducted habitation.



SUNSET OVER RIO BAY

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## CHAPTER III

### RIO AND PETROPOLIS

WHETHER you see it by night or by day, from the sea or from the heights of Santa Theresa, Rio is beyond all question beautiful, with a beauty that lingers like that of solemn music. Its approaches from the sea are as magnificent as its background of wooded hills; it is a dazzling gem, set in a splendid frame of blue and green; and very stately and seemly, on a scale befitting the grandeur of the scene in which the city is set, are the public gardens and esplanades that skirt the water front. But I think it is at night, from a height overlooking the harbour, where amidst the whispering pines you forget the jarring noises of the day, that Rio is beautiful beyond anything that words can express. All around and behind us the hills close in, as if guarding their treasures and mysteries against further invasion, their flanks teeming with the fierce tropical vegetation against which all the works of man's hands are but as the labours of Liliputians; out yonder, just topped by the rising moon, the sugar-loaf casts its vast shadow across the bay. Beneath us the myriad lights of the city, a perfect blaze at the centre and on the water front, stretch out on every side in graceful lines, like fairy processions, until in the far distance they flicker and are lost in the curves of the hills.

Never was a city so brilliantly lighted as Rio. Seafaring men will tell you that you can sometimes detect the glare of it a hundred miles away, and always within sixty miles.

It is the boast and pride of all her citizens. As a matter of æsthetics and a preventative of the evils that walk in darkness, the money is doubtless well spent; nevertheless, for a city and a people that are always pleading hopeless insolvency, this lavish consumption of gas and electricity (especially with fuel at war and famine prices) seems somewhat improvident. It is not for us, who sit in the free seats, to criticise the cost of the entertainment, not for us to be disturbed by the explanation which residents volunteer concerning the personal interest taken by certain of the City Fathers in the matter of public lighting. You hear many strange things about officialdom and its ways at the Club Central, but so many of the men you meet there are hanging on in the forlorn hope of collecting good or bad debts from the Government, that they cannot but diffuse an atmosphere of uncharitable suspicion. They tell you, for example, that the Brazilian Dreadnought did not put to sea, to meet the U.S.S. *Tennessee* on March 23rd, 1916, but remained snugly moored to the wharf (as she had been for several months) because the Admiralty found it more convenient to light her from the city mains than to let her generate her own electricity. This arrangement also saved cruising coal and kept her crew, largely composed of revolutionary politicians, in good humour. For all of which I vouch not.

In Rio, by day, there is something almost oppressive in the spectacle, and at the thought, of the giant strength of Nature, held here in check at the cost of man's unceasing labour. One feels that the forest jungle, this resistless sea of clinging green which laps and saps at every undefended point, has not been beaten; it is only pushed back, curbed and restrained for a little while, and some day Nature will take her revenge. She gave us a slight sample of her resources in March 1916. As the result of unusually

heavy rains, a large part of the lower sections of the town was suddenly flooded, and a few superfluous people were drowned in the streets; further back, slices of the hill-side were washed away, so that from the tram-line you saw the back rooms of a villa from which the terrace had departed, leaving wisps of drain-pipes hanging in mid-air, or a front staircase that had slithered gently down to rest among a group of supremely indifferent palms. But even without a sudden onslaught like this, you see unmistakable signs of the ceaseless pressure of the forest whenever you move even a little way beyond the main arteries of the city's traffic—creepers that swiftly cover and strangle every undefended wall, great spreading roots of trees that raise the concrete pavement from its bed, as with a Titan's hand.

A trip on the Leopoldina Railway between Rio and Petropolis reveals something of the grimness of the struggle that lies before the modern *conquistador*, the tiller of the soil, in this country. In bygone days this region was all cultivated by hardy Portuguese and even by German settlers, but to-day the line runs through dreary wastes of swamp and matted jungle growth. The settlers moved on, it seems, seeking easier labour further west, and the gradual silting up of the river made swamps of what had been fields. Later, a German company secured a concession to reclaim the land by dredging, and to grow rice and cotton thereon, but their money gave out in the struggle and once more Nature came into her own. Wherever she is still held back, in scattered clearings, it is with a puny hold. The little houses with their fenced gardens look like islands in the tangled wilderness, their outposts and defences often buried in the invading undergrowth. Here you may see a blue-painted mud-cabin, bearing the pathetic legend "Casa Paz y

Amor"; and there a wooden shanty labelled "Bazar Aurora," with a goat, a few hens and a patch of vegetables; and crowding in upon them are the vanguard of the forests' armies, palms and tree-ferns, acacias and bamboos. Even the railway line seems to shrink before them, confessing itself an impertinent intruder. Horlick's "three cows" advertisement, suddenly looming up against a background of jungle, becomes a fantastic derelict and a warning. The prolific richness of this tropic soil is its defence against the hand of man.

The city itself gives the impression of being remarkably energetic and well organised as to its business. Railways run down to and along the wharves, taking cargo directly to and from the ships. Porters and police, all in neat uniforms, are numerous and generally civil. It is difficult to reconcile all these outward and visible signs of bustling and orderly activity, with what one knows of the condition of Brazil's trade and finances. Later on, when you have looked beneath the surface of things and compared the activities and achievements of Rio with those of other Brazilian cities, you begin to realise that the capital is essentially a landing-place and a port of distribution, its profitable business derived chiefly from pickings and commissions, and that even this business is to a very great extent in the hands of aliens—Italians, British and Americans, and not of the native born. Your *pukka* Brazilian of the educated class has never got rid of his Portuguese forefathers' distaste for honest work: his idea of a respectable vocation is a Government job, and a sinecure for choice. The number of portfolios one meets in a morning's walk affords a fair idea of the locust-swarms of bureaucracy that prey upon productive industry in this country—no self-respecting clerk will go without one. Rio in this matter is Portugal translated, with a

wider background of opportunity; moreover, it is characterised, just as Lisbon is, by feverish political activities, and by an ostentatious imitation of Parisian fashions in dress and social amenities. There is, of course, a frugal, hard-working class of Brazilians, but the great majority of these are comparatively recent immigrants drawn from the peasantry of northern Portugal. The class of citizen produced by the intermarriage of Portuguese with negroes, mulattoes and quadroons would appear to be socially and economically less profitable to the State than the full-blooded negro; it is a breed which acquires the modern proletariat's exaggerated idea of individual's rights without any compensating idea of duty to the State, and produces a curious blend of primitive childishness and precocious modernity. In Rio evidence confronts you at every step, and in all classes of society, of the extent to which this interbreeding has affected the race—far more so than at São Paulo and other inland cities, where the flowing tide of Italian immigration has determined the structural character of the community.

The country's financial necessities, which had reached a critical stage at the end of 1914 (with a foreign debt of one hundred and four millions sterling), became much less acute in 1916; the war had by that time done for Brazil something that its politicians could never have done by talking, that is to say, it had compelled the country to produce for itself many things that it had been in the habit of buying on credit; it had thus led to a considerable development of agriculture and reduced the number of shopkeepers. The Government's expedients for raising money, and the prevailing scarcity of cash, were none the less clearly perceptible. Everything taxable is taxed in Brazil, either under a tariff so complicated that it takes a *despachante* expert to deal with it, or under

the consumption impost. If you buy a hat, you will find a ticket pasted inside it showing that the Government has levied 2000 reis on it; on a bottle of eau-de-Cologne they pinch 1000 reis. Even a syphon of locally made soda-water has to have its spout sealed with a forty-reis stamp. The ingenuity of an army of Custom House employés is continually directed towards bringing more grist to the tax-mill. In the summer of 1916, for example, one of them conceived the brilliant idea of charging duty on foreign newspapers arriving by post—the Postal Union regulations to the contrary notwithstanding—and this they proceeded to do, levying duty on the weight, so that the local newsagents had to employ special men to clear their papers through the Post Office. *The Times* rose promptly to the dignity of a sixpenny paper.

Another visible result of the war, and of the increasing difficulty of collecting debts in 1916, was that many trades had seen fit to adopt the cash system. It is a system which has its merits, but it may be carried to excess. I understand paying on the nail for goods received, but it goes against the grain to be asked by a photographer to pay for the development of films before he has done the job, or to be mulcted of a dentist's fee before he has extracted your tooth.

It was vouchsafed to me to study the workings of the tariff at close quarters. For the furtherance of the good cause of the Allies, and in order that the Brazilians might come to a better understanding of Germany and the Germans, I had brought out several complete sets of Raemaekers' coloured cartoons, intending in the first place to organise an exhibition which might lead to their distribution through the country. The idea, fortified by official blessings from London, was warmly welcomed by the local Committee of the Liga pelos Alliades, a small

but enthusiastic body of German-haters, who undertook to organise the exhibition. But we had reckoned without the Custom House. After two days of ponderous thought the appraisers decided that duty must be paid on the pictures by weight at the rate of 231 milreis (about £11 10s.) per set of 180 cartoons. They were good enough to explain that most of the weight was in the cardboard mounts, and that if the pictures were unmounted, the duty would be much less. As this meant an end to all ideas of bringing Raemaekers home to the Brazilian masses, the League indited a petition to the Minister of Finance; but His Excellency was going for a joy-ride to the Pan-American Conference at Buenos Aires, and naturally cared for none of these things. Then we engaged the services of a *despachante*, reputed to be an expert in circumventing the tariff, but he speedily proved to be a wind-fed man of straw. Finally, supported by a member of the British Consulate Staff, I secured admission to the office of the Chief Inspector of Customs—a highly scented sanctum, decorated with floral offerings and several ladies' photographs; from this bower I emerged, *rê infecta*, deeply convinced of the universal power of red tape, and of the blood brotherhood of bureaucrats. The cartoons remained in durance for over two months, and were ultimately released, I believe, on solemn recognisances being given by the Liga pelos Alliades, and upon the understanding that the case was not to be regarded as a precedent.

The attitude of the great majority of Brazilians at this period was unmistakably anti-German, but the far-reaching effects of Germany's propaganda and political finance were equally reflected in the cautious neutrality of the official and mercantile classes. Even a French bookseller in Rio, whom I approached on the subject of

exhibiting the Raemaekers cartoons in his window, declined the honour on the ground that he could not afford to irritate his Brazilian clients, amongst whom many had close relations with Germans, and that the price of plate-glass had become prohibitive. Amongst British importers and shippers also, there were to be found those who thought it best not to antagonise Wille, the all-powerful (local boss of the Hamburg-Amerika Line), so long as no definite order in Council had prohibited the carrying of German goods in British ships. Business is business, all the world over, and until the United States took the lead, Brazil was not taking any rash chances of German reprisals. But the sentiments of the populace were just as clearly hostile to Germany in Rio as they were in Buenos Aires, once the nature and objects of Deutschdum became understood, and when people had begun to realise the cold-blooded cynical devilry of German diplomacy, as practised by Count Luxburg and his agents. And the Germans themselves were beginning to realise the situation. No longer, as in the early days of the war, did they swagger and boast of what they were going to do in South America, when once England and France had been conquered. No, Fritz and Hans were walking delicately and speaking smooth things in Rio in the summer of 1916, evidently beginning to perceive that, even if Germany should escape military defeat, no power on earth could ever serve to obliterate the infamy which had become her portion throughout the seven seas. After the sinking of the *Lusitania*, all Germans were expelled from the Club Central at Rio; the Kaiser's portrait disappeared from shop windows, and the five able-bodied Teutons who made their living by discoursing music in the streets, found discretion the better part of valour and modified their répertoire on international lines. Herr Wille's stately

IN RIO HARBOUR

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marble hall, the Hamburg-Amerika's place of business in the Avenida Rio Branco, now tenanted by two listless clerks and void of customers, conveyed the meaning of sea-power in a way that even the humblest citizen could appreciate. Its impressive and aggressive style of architecture, a combination of the mailed fist and old Heidelberg sentimentality, had become definitely associated in the public mind with the unspeakable depravity of German Kultur. Like the arrogantly-exclusive German colonies of Santa Catharina and Rio Grande de Sul, it had come to represent something permanently alien and sinister, a menace to the future safety of the Republic. Long before diplomatic relations were broken off by their Government in April 1917, patriotic Brazilians were wont to expectorate on passing a German Consulate or Bank.

In the spring of 1916, the best hotels in Rio, the " Central " in the town and the " International " on the hill, were still too much frequented by Germans to be pleasant; I took up my abode, therefore, at the " Moderne," halfway up Santa Theresa, where mine host, a good Frenchman, would have none of them at any price. There is a wonderful view of the harbour and hills from the terrace of the " Moderne," and it is fairly out of the mosquito zone; also, from that terrace, in the early morning and at sundown, you can study the domestic habits of many humble households, chiefly negroid, in the little valley just below. The average Brazilian of the humbler class (especially the negro) does not regard domestic privacy as essential; in fact, judging by the glimpses of family life that one gets as the tramcars pass the houses which line the approach to the old aqueduct bridge, they display their *vie intime* as cheerfully as gold-fishes in a glass bowl.

From the little cluster of thatched cottages below the

"Moderne" there comes, day and night, a strident clamour of barking dogs and crowing cocks. Every cabin has its cur or two, and apparently every cur has a grievance, which it never ceases to air. On moonlight nights the noise assumes the dignity of a demonstration. Why the cocks should persistently crow at night is a mystery, but they do, and the practice in no wise diminishes their lung-power at dawn. At that hour all the energies of human and animal life in this little valley seem to be concentrated on the production of noise. Vociferous domestic argument, rising and falling amidst the blowing of pedlars' horns, the howling of babes and the lamentations of much miscellaneous live stock. Much of the hamlet's toilet was performed *àl fresco*, with a good deal of interesting *dêshabillé* in evidence. Thereafter, when the men had been fed and gone forth to their labours, comparative peace reigned. Babies and clothes were washed during the forenoon, by women whose raiment never got beyond the slipper-cum-peignoir stage. The peignoir habit, indeed, extends from the humblest up to the highest ranks of society; and in many ways it seems to typify the national habit of mind. The capacity of the average half-bred Brazilian for sitting by the hour in absolute, blank-minded idleness almost equals that of the Oriental. But when one considers how great has been the admixture of the imported African negro stock into the population of Brazil and how recent the abolition of slavery (1888), one ceases to wonder at many characteristics and customs of this people. It is sometimes a little difficult to remember how slowly for centuries, how quickly of late, things have moved in Brazil, to realise that many of the negroes one meets were actually slaves thirty years ago, and that it will take something more than a generation to eradicate in the wealthier classes the habits of body and mind that

grew out of the owning of human chattels. And in judging of the future of the country one has also to bear in mind that the importation of African negroes ceased in 1860, and that since then the country, especially the south, has been receiving a steady influx of white immigrants, sturdy Portuguese peasants and thrifty Italians. In time, no doubt, South Brazil will be white while the north remains largely black.

When, after the hour of the siesta, the wives and daughters of the people don garments of respectability and take the air *en famille* in the Avenida or in the public gardens, the general absence of all apparent motive in their movements also reminds one of the contemplative East. Men and women alike walk the street like somnambulists; the women's faces generally wear a stolidly detached expression, emphasised by the conventional decorum, which in public ignores the existence of the other sex and feigns not to hear its Rabelaisian quips. The men either saunter along or stand in groups, patting each other affectionately on the back and discussing local politics with much wealth of gesture, complacently blocking the footpath. The Avenida after four o'clock is a place for conversation rather than for locomotion; Europeans, and other foolish people in a hurry, generally hire a taxi. These vehicles are good of their kind, nearly all French machines, and greatly patronised for joy-riding by Brazilian blades. Each carries two drivers, solitary labour being uncongenial to the native mind; the second man's duty seems to consist in winding up the car, lighting the driver's cigarette, and keeping his eye on the police.

Observe a Rio policeman directing traffic, and you will begin to understand something of the mental habits and political institutions of this people. Before everything else, your Brazilian bobby is an official. He stands for

the majesty of bureaucracy, where the English type stands for the majesty of abstract law and order. From the hospitable precincts of the Engineers' Club, looking down on the Avenida, I watched one, a slim young negro, at his work. There was nothing of the soulless automaton about him; he represented all the infinite complexity of the human equation. With his white wand of office in his hand, artistically extended, he would weigh in his nimble mind the merits of vehicles approaching from opposite corners and suddenly decide in favour of one or the other on grounds best known to himself. This done, he would sign or even call to the favoured one to advance. At each change of his baton's semaphoric direction, he would whistle, and the whistling was practically incessant. If a pedestrian interrupted the performance to ask him a question, the entire traffic was stopped, unless, in his eagerness to give the desired information, he happened to gesticulate with the wand, in which case every vehicle proceeded to interpret the signals in its own favour.

Rio is very proud of its shops, and of their display of all the latest imported luxuries and vanities. It is proud of its ornate tessellated pavements and distinctly decorative system of street lighting. Like every other city in South America, it has acquired the picture-palace disease in an acute form, and those who cater to the public's taste in this kind of entertainment appear to have a very low estimate of its morals and mental condition. The class of film from which these people derive their ideas of life beyond their horizon, consists almost entirely of maudlin sentimentality, crude tomfoolery, *crimes passionnels* and burglary invested with a flavour of romance. When one thinks of what the Cinema might do towards educating this imaginative, emotional race, and what it is actually

doing to debauch their minds and give them a perversely distorted conception of the rest of the world, one is inclined to question the benefits of our civilisation with all its inventions of clicking machinery. Most of the paternal governments, run by and for professional politicians, in the Latin Republics, are eloquent, like our own demagogues, in the profession of highly moral sentiments. You will find their exhortations to public virtue circulating, in lieu of advertisements, on Government matchboxes and in other unexpected places, but neither the Board of Education nor any other Government department would appear to have considered the demoralising results of the intellectual hogwash in which the citizens are invited to wallow by the Press and the Picture-palace.

The Cinema, like the Lottery, is, of course, a stimulant, and human nature demands stimulants of one kind or another; but it is the business of intelligent rulers to see that they are supplied in a form that is not positively poisonous. As for the Lottery, *pace* our Anglo-Saxon ideas on the subject, it seems to me that properly conducted, there is no reason for this institution to be demoralising. On the contrary, it may be made to supply a perfectly natural craving for harmless excitement at a moderate cost to the individual, and with benefit to the State. To buy for five milreis a month's day-dreams of well-fed ease, or visions of a cosy little *fazenda* in the foothills, is surely to get better value in stimulants than if the money were spent on gin? Indeed, what could be wiser, in dealing with a people that insists on dreaming, than to provide them with roseate visions at a price that even the humblest peon can well afford by denying himself other and less innocent luxuries? But the craving of the Brazilian race for this kind of stimulant is a thing which a wise Government would tackle gently; in Brazil

it is gratified to excess, and the profits which the State makes in the process are excessive. The votaries at the shrine of the fickle goddess are made to pay an exorbitant price for their dreams, and the dreams are too short. The bureaucracy here fattens on the Lottery business just as in old Russia it lived by exploiting the national craving for drink; Church and State see to it that the drawings succeed each other with feverish activity. At Easter and other high festivals prizes and prices are doubled; the streets swarm with ragged urchins and touts, who press their tickets upon you at every step, raucously shouting their numbers and inviting you to step up and win 80,000 contos de reis. Nazareth and Co. and their ubiquitous kindred do a roaring trade, profiting, after the manner of their race, by the foolish weakness of the Gentiles.

For the stranger within its gates, Rio is withal a very pleasant place; full of the ethereal fragrance of tropic days and nights, of quivering lights and shadows; a garden city, set with orange groves and rustling palms, between blue waters and soft, shimmering hills. Beyond the raucous voices of the main streets you may wander and dream in restful by-ways, like those of the sea-bound towns of northern Portugal, through little *plazas* slumbering in the sun, past old-world gardens, where children laugh and play, and shaded *patios*, whose marble pavements glisten and gleam amidst white and purple flowers and cool ferns. Even in the heart of the city there are spots which remind one of the people and days that were before tramways were invented; one such is the fountain in the Largo da Carioca, where the women come to gossip and draw water. They carry it (generally in kerosene tins) on their heads, as Latin women should, and they walk with a curious undulating movement of the hips and a

flexibly rigid back, that remind you at once of the market women of Lisbon and Vigo.

It is winter in Rio from May to July, but the days can be unpleasantly hot in the lower levels of the city, when the north wind comes laden with the heavy breath of the wilderness of forest and swamp, that lies between us and the Caribbean. Even when the fresh south breeze blows, it is quite warm enough for the average Anglo-Saxon; but the climate is not unhealthy, if one will live sensibly, now that the yellow fever danger has been removed. The scourge which of old made the ports of Brazil a by-word and a terror to British seamen, has been lifted from the land; medical science (which, by the way, attains to a very high standard in South America) has shown that the fever-bearing mosquito can be prevented from breeding in and about the abodes of man, and the regulations on the subject of stagnant water are now well observed as a rule. Here and there a certain amount of laxity, born of immunity, is noticeable, and sooner or later Rio will no doubt pay the penalty of easy-going ways in dealing with *Stegomyia Calopus*, as they have paid it at Colon, Bahia and other places; but the plague can never again infect whole districts, or close the harbour to trade, as it used to do before Doctors Nazear and Cruz had convicted the mosquito of its crimes and had freed the Caribbean zone from the "pestilence that walked in darkness and the destruction that wasted at noonday."

Within two hours' journey by rail from the capital, snugly ensconced among the hills, lies Petropolis, fashionable resort of native legislators *en villégiature* and of foreign diplomacy *en négligé*. A cool and pleasant resting-place is this monument to the æsthetic business instincts of Dom Pedro, with its bijou residences and trim streets, its bamboo hedges that grow to twenty feet in height,

its gardens ablaze with hydrangeas, its fuchsias and roses. Just the sort of place to which diplomacy, weary of well-doing or convinced of futility, loves to escape from the indignities of office, to dream in peace of old age, covered with decorations and nourished on a liberal pension. All over the world la Carrière has found or created ideal spots of this kind, far from the madding crowd, where tea-parties and tennis, bridge, badinage and all the other parlour tricks of polite society may be enjoyed in comfort and without interruption from the outside world; spots in which, for three or four months in the year, a harassed Minister and his faithful staff may dodge most of the commercial travellers, wandering journalists and inquisitive M.P.s, who consider it their duty and their right to infest the Chancelleries. Delightful oases all, in a wilderness of sordid affairs, these retreats of diplomacy abroad: Pei-taiho for Peking, Chusenji for Tokyo, Newport for Washington, Alt-Aussee for Vienna, Yalta for Petrograd, Petropolis for Rio. If you have no business to discuss, or will refrain from discussing it, nowhere on earth will you find better entertainment or more hospitable hosts.

Very interesting, in this land where you see mankind in the melting-pot of mixed races, are the descendants of Julius Köhler's 3000 German settlers, imported by Dom Pedro II in 1845 as examples of industry for his people and for the making of Petropolis; curious, how the pure Teutonic type has persisted in spite of all temptations, and of comparative isolation; even where there has been intermarriage, the German stock seems to predominate in the offspring, and to be devoid of any instincts of assimilation. They manage their own affairs, these exiles from the Fatherland, serving the good old German god in the good old German way, educating little Hans and

Gretchen to despise their thriftless fellow-citizens, and to stand firm for Deutschdum *in partibus infidelium*. Up to the time of Brazil's joining the Allies, these grateful recipients of the New World's hospitality ran their own German school in Petropolis, as they did at many places farther south, under the auspices of State-assisted colonisation companies, affiliated to the German Banks as agents of *welt-politik*. Meeting the children as they came out of school one morning, I asked one sturdy blue-eyed lad what they taught him there. "Nur Deutsch," said he; and no doubt the Hymn of Hate was included in the curriculum. Here, amidst the hills, the war was worlds away, but the truculent swagger of this Brazil-bred German boy was a significant reminder of its fundamental origin.

At the time of my visit, the bourgeoisie of Petropolis was doing its best to celebrate the Carnival. There was a "German Ball" for the general public, roulette and a dance at the Palace Hotel, and other mild functions. But the rain fell steadily, in a steamy downpour that kept most people indoors (Brazilians have an almost Oriental dislike for getting wet—even the navvies at work on the railway line carry umbrellas) and the festival was shorn of its customary pomp and ceremonies. I do not know why it should be so, but rain certainly has a more damp and depressing effect in the tropics than with us. It may be because behind it there lurk no heart-warming visions of cosiness and coal fires; again, it may be due to the demoralising effect of moisture upon the habitations and handiwork of man in this climate. On a wet day the houses ooze and drip as if in sympathy with the dank vegetation around them; the copings of walls and the plaster statues dear to the Brazilian soul seem to be melting visibly. In the midst of Petropolis there stands

an imposing and melancholy ruin of a great church was begun by Dom Pedro's daughter, the maste Princess Isabella, some time after her marriage with Comte d'Eu in the 'sixties. Churches are of slow stately growth in this land, where the donations of faithful are apt to depend on the vicissitudes of the co and rubber markets, and this one was not completed w Dom Pedro, Isabella and all the machinery of monar were shipped back to Portugal in 1889 by the found of the Brazilian Republic. The effect of wind and r on this relic of the past makes it look like the unsigl wreckage of a fire; it would certainly be more seeml the clerical powers that be would only let Nature mercif cover it up, as she would swiftly do, with trailing curta of green and sweet-scented blossoms. But the Chu militant knows its business, and no doubt this eyes points a useful moral for the wayfarer and the scol Certainly many things were done better in the days genial Dom Pedro than they are under the prætor methods of the Republic.

Three things linger gratefully in my memories Petropolis. One is the vision of a humming-bird flashing jewel of bronze and blue and green, harvest honey from a fuchsia tree in the shade of a terraced gard The second was the delectable discovery of a cert cream cheese, made by Swiss and German settlers. Ea with quajava from Pernambuco, 'tis a food for the go a very dream cheese, in itself well worth a month's journ The third was a visit to the home of Senhor Carlo R rigues, formerly editor and owner of Rio's most nota newspaper, the *Jornal de Comercio*. A brisk young fell of seventy-two, Senhor Rodrigues; after an eventful a successful career, he has given up journalism and reti to the shade of bamboos and bananas to write his *op*

a work on the origins of the Christian religion. Indisputably one of the makers and master minds of modern Brazil, the influence which Rodrigues has exercised over his countrymen has been greater than that of any of his political contemporaries; it only shows what conscientious and consistent journalism may achieve, even in a land where yellow is the popular colour. The building up of the *Jornal* to the height of dignity which it attained was all his own doing; he made it a first-class newspaper and educated his public to appreciate it. He took *The Times* of Delane and Buckle as his model, and firmly refused to conform to twentieth-century ideals of commercial journalism; it was his boast, for example, that he never allowed advertisements to appear on the same page as reading-matter. Discussing the effect of the war upon Brazil and the financial outlook of the Republic, he was distinctly pessimistic, holding the view (not uncommon nowadays) that wise government is not to be expected of the type of professional politician produced by modern democracy. His conversation and views on life reminded me forcibly of those of Juan Franco, the Portuguese dictator, when in exile at Biarritz, looking down from contemplative heights of detachment on the noisy arena he had left. Rodrigues was something of a shock to one's preconceived conclusions about Brazil and the Brazilians; and Petropolis was somehow the last place in the world where one would expect to find a philosopher.

## CHAPTER IV

### POLITICS EN PASSANT

In March 1916 there was a great sending of prominent citizens from the United States, headed by Mr. Secretary McAdoo, in connection with the Pan-American Conference at Buenos Aires. Looking back on the political opinions expressed by these delegates of the Great Republic in Rio on that occasion, and later in the Argentine, what a distance we have travelled! In those days, if the truth must be told, the relations between Englishmen and Americans in most of the leading Republics were not enthusiastically cordial. At Rio there never had been much intimacy, partly because of trade rivalry, but more, I think, because the two communities, generally speaking, reside in different sections of the city, and because the climate does not lend itself to the pursuit of those outdoor sports in which Anglo-Saxons rub off each other's angles. At the Club Central the race line was drawn clearly enough for even a stranger to notice it—there were still English tables and American tables, even after the Germans' places knew them no more. After the sinking of the *Lusitania* there was an unmistakable feeling of restraint, a discreet avoidance of politics, on both sides. Every American there, having travelled and understanding something of world politics, resented the idea of being included in the "too proud to fight" category; they knew that sooner or later Old Glory must come in against the Hun, but they chafed at the delay involved in the President's process of educating the nation to abandon its long-

cherished ideals of pacifism. The futility of each successive Presidential Note to Berlin made the American colonies in South America more and more restive; but their chagrin was not a matter to be relieved by sympathetic discussion of the situation with such Englishmen as the war had left there.

At the reception given to Mr. Secretary McAdoo at the U.S. Embassy in Rio by the American Chamber of Commerce, one could feel, despite the music and the flowers and pretty speeches, something of the fierce undercurrents that ran beneath the polished surface of diplomatic and official ceremony. All the official world and his wife were there, besides a good many of the polyglot peripatetic kind of people, journalists, financiers and what-not, that seem to crop up wherever there is anything doing, and, of course, the usual sprinkling of artistic butterflies and birds of paradise. Such talk as was meant to be overheard was carefully confined to safe subjects, such as the weather, the Carnival festivities (twice postponed by rain) and the Pan-American programme; but the shadow of the war was upon us, for all our pious platitudes. It was all very well to talk of benevolent neutrality: every Anglo-Saxon there (including Mr. McAdoo), every Latin and nearly every Brazilian (not including Senhor Lauro Müller), could not but feel that the presence of Germans on such an occasion was unseemly, not to say offensive. It seemed a monstrous thing that by any shibboleth of convention of civilisation Germans should be received on a footing of equality and as decent members of society, while yet the ravaged cities of Belgium and northern France cried to heaven for vengeance on their unspeakable barbarism. Every decent man felt that there must be something rotten in a system of manners and morals which at a time like this not only

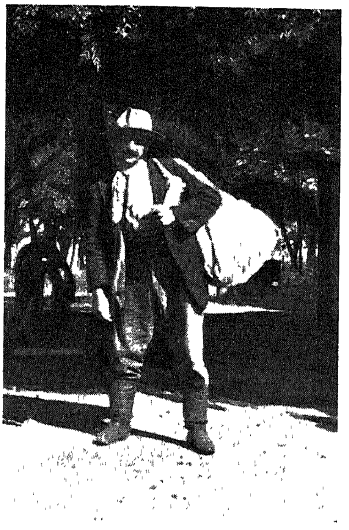
tolerated their presence, but invited them to drink to the health of an American envoy in the company of Englishmen, Belgians and Frenchmen. Setting aside their record of crime in Europe, every man there knew that the German Legations in South America were deliberately violating every obligation of neutrality and abusing the hospitality accorded them, plotting murder on the high seas and stirring up sedition and strife all over the continent. Even the average Brazilian had come to regard the diplomatic exponents of Kultur as calculating Calibans and pariahs: yet here they were, smirking, and clicking their heels under the hospitable folds of Old Glory! No doubt it had to be, but it made a good many of us sick; diplomacy, even neutral diplomacy, was for once quite obviously uncomfortable. As for me, I looked out across the bay, where the heavy clouds were shedding themselves in torrential rain, and drank to "the day" —the day of Germany's expiation. And I offered up a little special prayer that wisdom may hereafter be vouchsafed to us to abandon the outworn creed of diplomacy which entrusts the discussion of international affairs to well-bred marionettes trained in the arts of polite mendacity and chicane; that grace may be given us to forsake the shibboleths of subterfuge and flapdoodle, whereby until now we have sought to maintain the British birthright in foreign lands. Surely no self-respecting English or American diplomat will ever again regard it as part of his duty to ask an unrepentant German to dinner, at least in the lifetime of the present generation?

There was a good deal of talk about the Monroe doctrine at this reception to Mr. McAdoo, and later, in Buenos Aires, a good deal about the "European system" and Pan-American ideals, but somehow all these things seemed to have lost their vital essence in a world confronted by

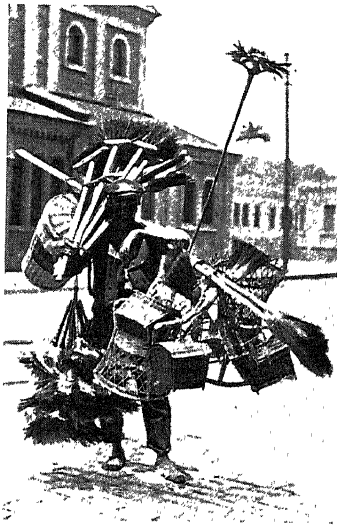
he reality of brute force. Senator Root had not then tated the self-evident truth that old Monroe's doctrine ıad hitherto been maintained by an even balance of power n Europe and by the supremacy of the British fleet, but :he fact was instinctively recognised none the less. Americans had come to perceive that if all the collective ɔledges given by the civilised Powers at the Hague had ɔeen ruthlessly swept aside by the Prussians, there was ıo longer any safety for North or South America in a declaration of continental isolation, which had never even ıttained to any recognised force as international law. Here in Rio there was evidence and to spare that the famous doctrine was played out, as Admiral Mahan had foretold it would be; every one concerned was now fully alive to the fact that if Germany emerged triumphant from the war, nothing but ships and guns could prevent her from invading and annexing territory on the American continent, and imposing her own trade conditions for the future. Mr. President Wilson's latest message to Congress, reiterating his faith in " the rights of the American republics to work out their own destinies without interference," and his new dream of a League to Enforce Peace, served as texts for many eloquent orations, but behind them, more substantial and convincing, were the visions and voices from ravaged Belgium and Serbia. No panoply of sounding phrases could henceforth guard any nation against unprovoked aggression, that much was clear; and for those who could read the writings on the wall at these gatherings of neutrals, it was also clear that America, for the sake of her ideals and as a matter of self-preservation, could not afford to stand aloof much longer. If it had not been for the insidious influences brought to bear by German political finance on individuals and groups of politicians in the Argentine, Chile and Brazil,

and also for the pro-German activities of the Roman Catholic clergy, the unmistakable sympathies of the masses in South America for the Allies would have been declared much sooner than they were; as it was, the inarticulate public could only relieve its feelings by processions and the breaking of German windows.

Amongst those who professed to hope and believe that the shadow of Monroe might still serve some useful purpose in days to come, it was quite evident, even before Mr. Roosevelt's olive-branch tour of the South in 1913, that Brazil, Argentina and Chile were no longer prepared to accept the doctrine, unless they were admitted by the United States to full equality in the matter of policing and protecting the continent. The A B C Republics had become very restive, long before the war, because of Washington's assumption of a censorship of morals and manners over the southern continent. Their dignity as sovereign States was offended at the idea of any such protectorate; so much so, indeed, that the activities of Mr. John Barrett and the international idealism of the Pan-American Bureau, had become matter for derision and even for suspicion, in more than one southern capital. South America expected the United States to act up to its motto " E pluribus Unum "; furthermore, the leading Republics evidently intended to insist on their right to reject any kind of " Monroismo," or Pan-Americanism, which might hereafter interfere with their independent relations with European countries, either in finance or politics. All these things were in the air, vague yet perceptible, when North and South America came to take counsel together as neutrals, and when the Northern Republic was at pains to disavow not only " the vague and barren responsibilities " of the Monroe doctrine, but the idea of northern predominance. The shadow of



A TURCO PEDLAR



A HAWKER OF BRUSHES AND BROOMS, RIO

RUFFO, THE SHEEP-SHEARER

A PEDLAR OF TIN AND IRON WARE

coming events was clearly marked, for those who cared to see: the Monroe doctrine was clearly doomed to extinction, relegated to the limbo of creeds outworn. In the struggle of civilisation against Prussiandom, Pan-Americanism was bound to include Great Britain and South America, to identify itself with the cause of Italy, Portugal, England and France. The moral, intellectual and economic ties that bound the New World to the Old were not to be weakened, but greatly strengthened, as the result of the war. Later on, when the infamies of Luxburg and his hirelings had been fully revealed, and when Brazil had followed the example of the United States in declaring war upon the Hun, the sympathies of the Latin republics were expressed in a manner which showed how deep and widespread is the affection of this people for France, the spiritual home of their civilisation. Even in the Argentine and Chile, where German money and German threats retained their hold upon venal and timorous officialdom, it was manifest that loathing for the Prussian and all his ways had become a force to be reckoned with, something that will cost Germany dear in the days to come. To have incurred the hatred and contempt of the young and vigorous nations of the New World, of those upon whom Germany must rely for most of the raw materials she needs, this is one of the triumphs which von Tirpitz and his Junkers failed to foresee when they decided to violate all the recognised rules of civilised warfare.

It was no small joy for one wandering Briton to realise these things, to perceive men and events shaping themselves slowly but surely for the final discomfiture of the common enemy in this gathering of neutrals, cautiously polite. In the same way, four months later, at the celebration of the Argentine Republic's centenary at

Buenos Aires, it was with no small satisfaction that I found on all sides evidence of the fact that the pro-German policy of President Irigoyen and his political henchmen was in no sense representative of the sentiments of the Argentine people, or even of a majority in Congress. There is, no doubt, a section of the mercantile community in the Argentine (just as there is, alas, in England) whose private interests are bound up with maintenance of their trade relations with Germany; there are the German training and traditions of the army; there are a number of hybrid cosmopolitans and a group of disloyal Irish, whose wealth gives them a certain influence in politics, and there is always, as a dominant factor in international affairs, the jealous rivalry of the Argentine with Brazil for predominance and leadership in South America, and a chronic tendency to assert the dignity of the Republic by snubbing the United States; but all these influences combined were unable to check the increasing manifestation of strong anti-German feelings throughout the country. Every addition to the list of outrages committed by German submarines and aircraft against non-combatants served, here as elsewhere, to stimulate the Hymn of Hate, the universal song without words, which Kultur has inspired from China to Peru.

There were no German or Austrian flags to be seen in the streets of Buenos Aires during the Centenary festivities in July 1916. On the other hand, there were enthusiastic demonstrations of popular sympathy with the cause of the Allies, so much so that many worthy neutrals (possibly in anticipation of the Black List) were going out of their way at this time to assure the British and French Ministers that they had never had any German connections. The number of our Dutch, Swedish and Swiss friends was far greater, it seemed, than anybody

would ever have believed before the successes of the Anglo-French offensive in Flanders. The President, it is true, supported by the German subsidised section of the Press, persisted in his policy of benevolent neutrality, but it was clear that in so doing he was ignoring and irritating public opinion and sowing poisonous seeds of internal discord, from which he and his friends will eventually reap a harvest of severe retribution.

But enough of these things. Let us leave the tangled undergrowth of politics, let us cease from pursuing the poisonous track of the Prussian, and get back to the fresh air of the open road.

## CHAPTER V

### IN AND ABOUT SÃO PAULO

THERE is no subject more interesting in Brazil than that of the evolution of the race under the combined influences of climate, immigration and the fusion of many stocks. Men who have studied these things foresee that before long the result of the tide of emigration that has flowed into the southern and temperate States from Europe—chiefly from Italy—for the last hundred years will eventually produce two different types of humanity and civilisation in Brazil, that of the north remaining dominated by the negro strain. There is no doubt that in the south the negro is destined to disappear, gradually eliminated and absorbed by process of intermarriage into the numerically superior European stock. Temperate South America may thus escape the racial problem which confronts the United States in its unassimilated negro population. Humanly and economically, who shall say which is likely to produce the better results, the Anglo-Saxon's instinctive aversion to fusion with the coloured race, or the catholic cross-breeding, sanctioned by the creed of the Conquistadores?

In the city of São Paulo, only 300 miles from Rio, one can see at a glance the effect of a slight difference in climate on the destinies of a new people whose evolution has been, and still is, determined by immigration. The city stands at a height of about 2500 feet above sea-level, on the fertile tableland of the Sierra do Mar—high enough

to make its climate healthy and congenial for an Italian or Portuguese peasant labouring with his hands, and suitable for the rearing of his children. Thanks to that half-mile of elevation, the whole atmosphere of this, the most beautiful and prosperous city north of the Paraná, is entirely different from that of Rio, as different as Milan is from Lisbon, and much in the same way. In the first place, the negro element is conspicuously less; the general type of citizen that you see in the busy streets and on the flowery way of the Avenida Paulista has in it very little to remind one of the old colonial days, of the São Paulo of the Mamelucos or even of the more recent São Paulo, remembered of many of its inhabitants, when the great coffee estates were still worked by slave labour. Both in its architecture and the appearance and manners of its people, the city gives one the impression of modern Italy, or Basque France, transplanted, rather than of predominant Portuguese influence; and as a matter of fact, more than half its population are of Italian descent. Between 1830 and 1900, over a million emigrants came from Europe to the State of São Paulo, and of these 700,000 were Italians. Not all were settlers, for here, as in the Argentine wheat lands, there has always been a migratory tide of labour, men who cross the Atlantic year after year to harvest the coffee crop and then return to their beloved Italy with a full purse; but over 250,000 have made their home in the city of São Paulo since 1890 and, until the war, the cry was still they come. Six years after the abolition of slavery, the population of the city was only 40,000 ; it is now close on half a million. Small wonder that the negro figures less and less in the Paulista crowd—for he has had no reinforcements from Africa since 1860, and in the meanwhile the children born of the union of negro women with whites or Indians or Mulattoes,

gradually merging into the half-breed stock, assist in their turn to eliminate the black strain.

It is a far cry from this most picturesque and prosperous city, this place of beautiful gardens and well-planned streets, to the days when the fierce half-bred Mamelucos made the name of Paulista a byword and a thing of fear, when their slave-hunting *bandeiras* drove the Jesuits from Paraná and made life miserable for peaceful men wherever there was anything worth stealing, from the borders of Peru and Bolivia to the mission settlements of Paraguay. And yet, it is not so long ago that this cut-throat breed of Portuguese and Indian blood preyed on all productive industry in this region. And when you think of the change which has been wrought by Italian immigration, the magic significance and evolutionary influence of these little hills becomes plainly manifest. Were it not for them, this land now teeming with fruitful industry would have remained a black or brown belt, the haunt of malaria and marauders. Further south, in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catharina, prosperity and progress have similarly come within the great colonies of German and Polish settlers; but whereas the majority of Italians have become loyal citizens of the Brazilian Republic, the Germans have remained contemptuously aloof, unassimilated aliens, a menace to the State. All this region is evidently destined to become a teeming granary, a source of food supply for the Old World, a white man's country to be populated from overstocked and underfed Europe. A hundred years hence, it is safe to say, there will be less left of the negro strain in the Brazilians of the South than in the Portuguese race itself. Here you have mankind in the making, a new race in its childhood, full of promise for the future. Brazil has many storms to weather, many sins of the fathers to be

expiated by the children, but the wealth of the land is all undeveloped and the rising generation are rapidly learning the lesson of good citizenship. Also the war has taught them to see what opportunities are theirs in a land whose vast resources have as yet been scarcely touched by commercial enterprise.

In political ideals, in civic administration and in its social institutions, the life of São Paulo reflects the gradual fusion of the new and virile Italian Latinity with the adulterated Latinity of the old Brazilian stock. From these two sources the city derives its intellectual and political activities; from them are drawn its lawgivers and the upholders of its social code of manners and morals. The swift moods and passions, the fatal instability that characterise elsewhere in Brazil (as in Portugal) the mixed race of Iberian, Indian and African descent, with all the marks left upon it by Moorish domination, are being steadily tempered and subdued to the intelligent vivacity and practical common sense of the Italian. These, being by nature adaptable, conform easily to Brazilian ways in many things, and marry freely into Brazilian families. This very adaptability goes far to explain the influence of their ideas and activities. No doubt that in time the Italian immigrant loses something of his birthright and is in subtle ways influenced by the tutelary spirits of his new home. One notices, both in politics and in the social code, recognition of the maxim that in Rome one must do as the Romans do; there may be a certain relaxation of moral fibre (probably climatic), an aggravation of the Neapolitan tendency to oratorical heroics and inflated rhetoric, and an exaggeration of Latin idealism and of faith in the virtue of political dogmas. But the net result, beyond all doubt, is a very satisfactory balance of healthy activities, physical and mental.

The social code, and particularly the unwritten but drastic laws that govern the relations of the sexes, are apparently much the same in São Paulo as they are in other cities of South America; new blood and new ideas from overseas seem to modify them but little. To the stranger at first sight there is something strange in the persistence, in these highly cultured and mentally progressive communities, of traditions and customs clearly traceable to the domination of the Moors and the influences of the Semitic East in the Iberian peninsula; something almost mediæval in the passive semi-oriental attitude of women and the undisguised prevalence of irregular polygamy amongst men. But gradually one comes to perceive that a system which seems monstrous in temperate Argentina and Uruguay may be defensible in subtropical Brazil; that the code, which thus confines respectable women within narrow limits of duty and decorum, has grown out and because of the conditions of life in a land where fierce hot-blooded passions lie very close to the surface and where for centuries slavery and subject races facilitated the polygamous instinct in man. It is a code, like most others of its kind, designed to protect the family as the basis of ordered society and woman against the dangers prevailing in that society. Its laws are rigidly enforced by public opinion, which is partly an inheritance from the teaching of the Jesuits, but even more the result of the instinctive conservatism and caution of the women themselves. If they appear to hug their chains, it is evidently because they realise that freedom of social intercourse with the average Brazilian, in his present state of evolution, would mean chaos. As things are, the relations of Brazilian women of the educated classes with men are practically confined to their own family circle. Every girl of good family is educated to the idea that her

future life belongs entirely to her husband and children. For the rest, she is expected to practise prudent circumspection in following the example of Cæsar's wife, lest the heathen, quick of ear and glib of tongue, find cause to blaspheme. As the French wife of a wealthy Brazilian tersely put it: "*Il faut beaucoup de tenue.*" Under such conditions, human intercourse is naturally restricted and displays but little intellectual activity and few social amenities. Social functions, public and private, exist chiefly under the direction and for the purposes of mothers with marriageable daughters; and their attitude towards the male sex is one of artful encouragement tempered with unsleeping vigilance. Of this matter, and of the many curious results of the segregation of the sexes in South America, I purpose to say more hereafter. In São Paulo, one of its consequences is conspicuous in the frankly bored attitude of the younger men, especially those of the wealthier class, who have travelled in Europe. For them, outside the family circle, there are but few social distractions, and the only women they have any chance of meeting unchaperoned are the *demi-mondaines* of the "Étoile de Montmartre," of the Parisian *cabarets* and *pensions d'artistes*—observe the euphemism—which flourish exceedingly in all these parts. For the young blood there is no respectable half-way house between the wilderness of wild oats and the enclosed garden of matrimony, no sports or public amusements in which young men and women can meet on frank terms of friendship. There are dances, of course, and bazaars and the theatre, but at all of these the unmarried girl is protected by barbed wires of vigilance from the wolves in sheep's clothing. At a ball there are no cosy corners, no facilities for flirtation; the young woman must treat her partner with austere ceremony and after every dance go straight-

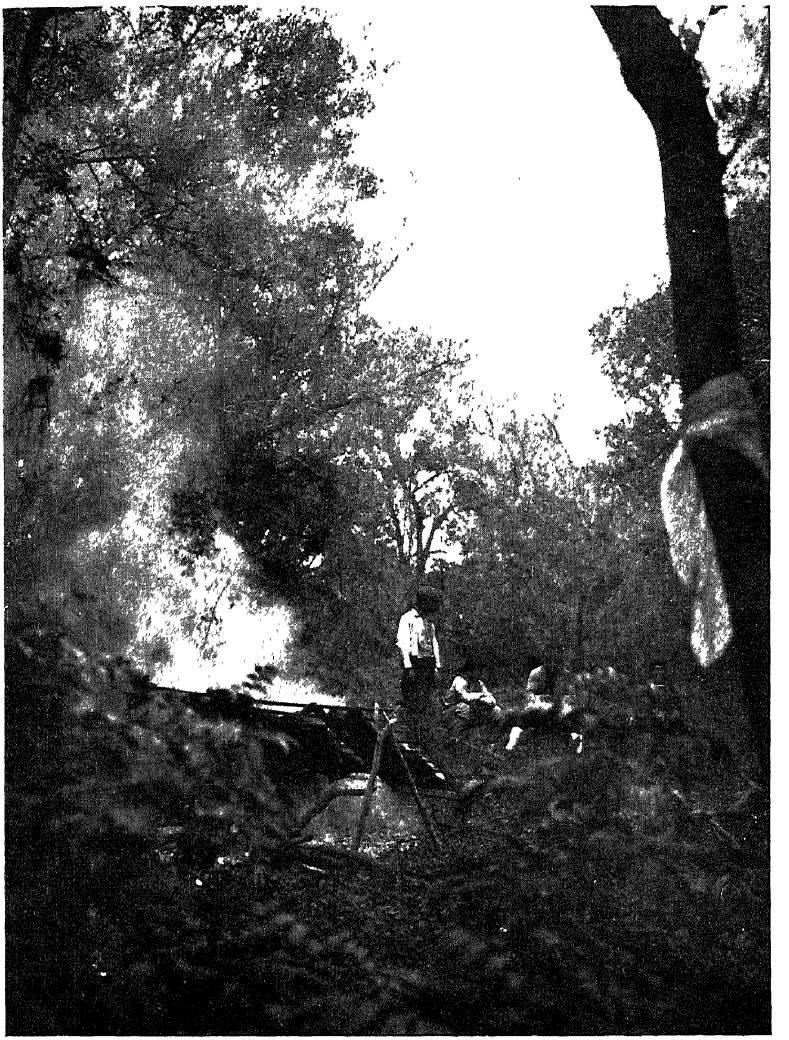
way back to mother. Married women should not dance—*ce n'est pas bien vu*—nor may they with impunity be seen talking to a male acquaintance in the street or driving by themselves in an open carriage. The virtue of a married woman is a matter so closely touching the honour of her lord, according to the hidalgo tradition, that she must needs walk circumspectly all the days of her life if she would avoid poisonous tongues of scandal. But a married man may, and does, keep a mistress openly, and lose little or nothing in public esteem. He may not flaunt his liaisons quite so unblushingly in São Paulo as in Rio, but Senhora Grundy knows all about his peccadilloes and calmly winks the other eye. There are Brazilians of the old school, who preserve dignified traditions of sincerity and loyalty in the married state, but with the *nouvelle couche*, man's attitude towards woman is a mixture of proprietary rights and polygamous activities. Socially and sexually he passes through three phases: a spring-time of riotous dalliance with the daughter of the horse-leech; a sober summer of matrimony and paternity; and an autumn of wild oats brought under careful cultivation. Physically, the native-born Brazilian, like other descendants of the Spaniards and Guaraný Indians further south, is generally picturesque and graceful; mentally, he is romantic, impulsive and undisciplined; add to these qualities a strong philoprogenitive instinct and luxurious proclivities, and you begin to realise why the social code is what it is.

Things being as they are, your young Brazilian blade, his appetite for romantic adventures frequently stimulated by yellow-back novels, is apt to denounce the rigid restrictions of the code which encompasses him, and to sigh loudly for the superior civilisation of New York, London and Paris. The vision is ever before his eyes of lands in

which a man may take a young woman for a walk or a meal without being expected to marry her next day; where it is lawful for one, whether contemplating matrimony or not, to talk to the object of his affections without the assistance of third parties. He fails to make allowance for the facts which compel Brazilian mothers to be so careful, and is apt to wax very indignant on this subject. Pending the conversion of those who make and maintain the existing social code, however, he consoles himself *tant bien que mal.* In piping times of peace, for those who can afford it, there is always the prospect of a trip to Europe, and when Mahomed cannot go to the mountain, fragments of the mountain detach themselves, for purposes of profit, and migrate cheerfully to South America; opera troupes, light comedy companies and variety artistes, not to mention *petites maîtresses* and *grandes cocottes* of migratory instincts. And behind these, less conspicuous but ubiquitous, is the White Slave traffic, which grows with the wealth of these South American communities. The rigorous seclusion of women, alluring, provocative but inaccessible, in communities where polygamous instincts are undeniably strong, has got to be paid for, in one way or another. The ancient and permanent social code of the Orient has solved the problem by frank acceptance of youthful marriage and polygamy as recognised institutions, based on the patriarchal family system; by so doing, it has escaped the network of intrigue and artificial conventions, the evils of prostitution and illicit relations, which the European system has incurred. On the other hand, it pays the penalty for its social code in a birth-rate that vastly exceeds all possible means of subsistence, and in a struggle for survival far more severe than anything known in other parts of the world. A choice of evils, you may say, arising like so many others out of the eternal

conflict of human nature with its material environment and moral aspirations, only to be solved by long processes of education and by the elevation of the masses. No doubt; and possibly in course of time even the New World may come to follow the road to the millennium of morality, as laid down by Bernard Shaw, Mrs. Sidney Webb and women legislators in England and the United States. But judging by the actual state of public and private opinion prevailing on the subject throughout Latin America, the emancipation of woman in that region at all events lies in the dim and very distant future.

Of its public institutions, education and administration, São Paulo has every reason to be proud. The Avenida Paulista, with its magnificent gardens adorning the palatial homes of coffee kings, bureaucrats and captains of industry, is an object-lesson in the art of making a city beautiful. The Theatre Municipal is a stately dignified building, besides being an active centre of social and civic life. (It contains even a public bar, where good music is performed, which from midnight till 1.30 a.m. attracts a mixed, unconventional, but very orderly crowd of *viveurs* and *demi-mondaines*.) The streets, especially in the fashionable suburbs, are nobly planned, and lined with goodly trees. Particularly pleasing and effective is the general scheme of metal work, designed and made in the local technical schools and workshops, for the decoration of lamps, doors, railings and balconies; light, graceful work pleasantly reminiscent of Italy and Spain, yet with a distinctive note of its own. The general standard of technical and professional knowledge is high, as indeed it is in other centres of learning throughout South America, for the State believes in the benefits of education and supplies it practically free (50 milreis a year is the fee for a college student—say £2 10s.). It costs



A PICNIC IN THE WOODS

[*To face p.* 76.

the community something considerable for every doctor, engineer and lawyer that it turns out, but except perhaps in the case of lawyers (addicted here as elsewhere to politics) the expenditure seems to be justified by results. The medical profession, in particular, has attained a remarkably high pitch of progressive efficiency; the public health of São Paulo is distinctly satisfactory.

A very interesting example and achievement of medical science at São Paulo is the Institute at Butantan, where since 1901 serum has been made for protection against snake-bite, bubonic plague and other calamitous diseases. Snakes, poisonous and harmless, are the chief business of this remarkable establishment, under the direction of Dr. Vital Brazil, a man whose name is blessed wherever rattle-snakes, adders and vipers lie in wait for bare-legged man. The Institute makes three kinds of snake serum, for use respectively against the bites of *Crotalus terrificus*, the nine species of *Lachesis*, and venomous species in general; it keeps for the purpose a model snake-farm, where hundreds of these deadly beasts, collected from all over the country, lie basking in their own snug place in the sun, or bathing in the moat—a spot which, from a distance, looks uncommonly like one of the horseshoe graveyards of Southern China, with its trees, tunnel and circular wall of concrete. Here the snakes, some 5000 or 6000 every year, are gently but firmly dealt with, compelled to discharge the contents of their poison pouches into receptacles not of their own choosing. To see Dr. Vital and his men handling them is to appreciate the contempt that familiarity breeds. Their poison, on its way to becoming serum, passes a certain time in the veins of horses (who seem to thrive on it) and is eventually distributed all over the continent. On coffee or sugar-cane plantations, in swampy regions where men labour with

their hands, the efficacy of this antidote to bites that were formerly fatal, has become so generally appreciated that no major-domo is without his tubes of serum; by a law of the State, it is on sale at every chemist's and available at all hospitals and health offices. The need for a remedy of some sort was urgent, for the Brazilian peon, like his brother of Mexico, prefers the risks of snake-bite to the wearing of boots. The most frequent cause of fatalities is the small, comparatively inconspicuous and swift-striking "jararaca" (*Lachesis lanceolatus*); 60 per cent. of the casualties are bitten on the foot and 22 per cent. on the hand. Boots, therefore, would save many a life, but no doubt a tube of serum comes cheaper, and your Brazilian forest worker is enough of a fatalist to say, better swift Death, if it must come, than the intolerable burden of putting on and taking off one's boots every day.

Dr. Vital's ideas in the matter of snakes are not confined to providing a remedy against their bites. He has a separate enclosure at the Institute in which he collects, breeds and observes all manner of non-poisonous serpents, with a particularly watchful eye for those whose tastes lead them to slay and devour their poisonous cousins. Of these there are several lively species, and the Institute makes it a branch of its business to educate *fazendeiros* to distinguish them, so that their beneficent appetites may be encouraged. Judging by the general appearance of these brutes, however, I should say that the average farm hand will require to be very firmly based in his knowledge and faith before he desists from slaying them, especially as Nature has compensated them for their lack of poison by giving them horrid vicious tempers, sinister looks, and a nasty way of advancing upon one open-mouthed, with every appearance of deadly intent. On the other hand,

the poisonous ones, secure, I suppose, in their sense of power, are sluggishly disposed, and allow themselves to be handled almost placidly. I saw one small and comparatively harmless-looking Lachesis allow itself to be swallowed, almost amicably and without protest, by a very horrid striped monster of the innocuous kind, which had previously made a vicious attack on the attendant's boot. But it is not the exclusive property of the serpent tribe to assume offensive manners for lack of other effective argument.

Railway travelling is much the same all over Brazil, but the lines connecting São Paulo with the rest of the country, and especially the fifty-mile road that runs to the port of Santos, are better laid and equipped than the majority. The Santos line is, indeed, a little wonder in its way; it is not often nowadays that a railway has to spend money freely on ultra-provident work of a decorative kind, so as to keep its earnings within limits that shall not provoke official criticism or cupidity. The Santos line has a monopoly of very lucrative traffic, connecting the State capital and the richest coffee country in the world with its port of shipment; it is therefore wise to guard it against wash-outs and other calamities; an elaborate system of surface drainage in concrete intersects every steep incline on the hillside clearings, right up to the edge of the forest, and the Company's rolling stock is of the very brightest and best. On the São Paulo branch of the "Central do Brazil" (the line that runs to Rio) there is less decorative activity, but the service is good enough and the fares reasonable. A first-class ticket for the 309 miles journey costs 32 milreis; in the Pullman it is 50 (say £2 10s.); the trip takes twelve hours, the going is fairly comfortable, and they serve an excellent lunch *en route*. The locomotives and observation cars are North American.

Whenever you speak of the United States in connection with Brazilian Railways, or indeed whenever you speak of any Brazilian enterprises in which foreign capital is concerned, sooner or later some one says "Farquhar"; and from that moment the conversation leaves the domain of commonplace undertakings and soars into the region of Napoleonic, not to say Homeric, speculation. The trail of Farquhar finance lies broad across the South American continent, a thing of gorgeous colours and splendid visions. Like the dolphin of the classics, *mille trahit moriens adverso sole colores;* compared with its rainbow hues, ordinary everyday business seems for ever flat, stale and unprofitable. For reasons already explained, I do not profess in this book to discuss matters financial and commercial: if I speak now of Mr. Farquhar, it is because of his peculiar quality as a man, because the ideas which radiated from him in such profusion, whether financially profitable or not, have left their mark upon the continent. Farquhar's follies, they call them sometimes—for example, that Palace in the wilderness, the hotel and gambling casino at Guarujá—but the impression that one forms of his meteoric career, even when other company promoters and financiers discuss it, suggests something of the *conquistador* quality, something of the superman capacity for seeing and seizing opportunities which, with a little luck, makes a Cecil Rhodes or a Pierpoint Morgan. The difference between a great man and a little man is only a difference of ideas; between a successful man and a failure it is often only a matter of luck in finding the right underlings to carry out ideas. Farquhar in the end seems to have fallen a victim to his hobby for collecting railways; as with others who have indulged in this hobby, it came to such a pitch with him that if he found a little fatherless line, lost stolen or astray in the wilderness, he would

forget everything else, *quebracho* and the cattle on a thousand hills, to follow after it. In the inception of brilliant ideas and in their swift pursuit, he seems to have had many of the qualities which go to the making of pushful politicians, of the Northcliffe-Churchill type, but he lacked continuity of method and mastery of detail, things which may not matter so much in politics, but are still profitable in business.

Another impression that one gets from casual and disinterested observation of railways and railway finance in Brazil—and indeed throughout the leading Republics—is that, in the long run, the public of Great Britain is likely to do better by investing its surplus cash in home industries, or even by playing domestic ducks-and-drakes with it, than by lending it to South America to build railways. I am aware that this is not the idea which the intelligent public has been led to hold on the subject by those whose profitable business it is to float foreign loans; but observation on the spot tends to emphasise the fact that the attitude of any State (naming no names), like that of the people behind it, is not quite the same towards capital when it wants to borrow, as it becomes when it has borrowed and has to pay the interest. All the world over, the *mauvais quart d'heure* of borrowing States is becoming more and more frequently accompanied by manifestations of the modern syndicalist or Bolshevist's creed, which denounces the capitalist as a blood-sucking iniquity, and requests the Government to tax him out of the country, if not out of existence. No wise Government, no matter how republican, will ever quarrel outright with the money market; it will continue rather to encourage competition among lenders, and to borrow upon terms which will enable it to placate the proletariat by the provision of pickings and perquisites for place-seekers. Brazil is by

no means the only country in which railways are made to serve ends other than those of transportation, in which they become prolific milch cows for the benefit of politicians and pluralists; but no one who studies the way in which they are worked here can fail to perceive that the local individual with a " pull " is likely to get considerably more profit out of them than the bondholder overseas. Things have improved, no doubt, since the days of Senhor Frontain, when more than one milch cow showed signs of impending paralysis, but on many lines the system of administration seems to be framed on the modern trade-union principle of setting three men to do one man's job. In a trip between the little wayside town of Apparecida and São Paulo, on a so-called " express," which stopped at every station, a Brazilian friend and I had a first-class carriage to ourselves so far as passengers were concerned; but there was no lack of company, inasmuch as four employés of the Company shared it with us all the way, smoking, eating, sleeping and chatting with much cheerful sociability. One was the *chef de train*, who slept with his feet on the cushions, a thing which the conductor had politely requested us not to do. Another was in charge of the mails, the third looked after baggage, and the fourth punched tickets, when there were any. A fifth individual, who tapped the coach wheels when so disposed, looked in for a smoke at intervals. Their talk was chiefly of politics and their professional prospects, the two subjects being evidently interdependent. At every station, the number of gentlemen in uniform was on the same lavish scale; their pay is generous and they become entitled to pensions, I believe, after two years' service, should they break down under the strain of their exertions. Assuredly democracy is a goodly spreading tree and its fruits are rare and refreshing, as has been finely said by one who

has freely watered its roots; but concern for the public purse is not one of them. They tell me that there are eighteen field-marshals, over a hundred generals, and 10,000 privates in the Brazilian Army. For "privates" read "passengers," and you get a fairly correct idea of the Brazilian Railway administration.

On the way from Rio to São Paulo, passing through the southern strip of Minas Geraes, you notice cattle-bearing tracts of grass country, scattered amidst the coffee plantations and the rice fields; in the *fazendas* of the São Paulo plateau the cattle industry is rapidly growing, as the result of the war and of the interest displayed in its possibilities by the great Chicago packing firms. Even had there been no war to stimulate the demand, it is certain that the Brazilian herds must soon have attracted the attention of Swift, Armour and other canning fellows, for a vast amount of good beef had long been going to waste on the primitive ranches of the southern plains, lacking only freezing plant at suitable spots to convert it into food for Europe and wealth for Brazil. Most of the new American meat enterprise is centred in Rio Grande do Sul, but *frigorificos* have already been started in São Paulo, and there are big things doing in the State of Paraná. South of that State, where the night frost region begins, the conditions for cattle ranching are in many respects the same as those of Paraguay and Uruguay, over the border, but north of Paraná there are no frosts to kill the rich "fattening grass" (*caipim gordura*); so that the pasture value of the northern States, and especially of Matto Grosso, would seem to be higher than that of the south, and the future of the great ranching companies only a matter of transport and *frigorificos*. An amateur, looking at the surface of things, wonders why Chicago did not stretch out its tentacles over these Brazilian herds

long ago. Doubtless the explanation is, that it is only within the last ten years that the United States has become an importer, as well as an exporter of meat; that, like England and for the same reasons, its vast warrens of industrial workers will in future have to be supplied with food by countries that have a surplus to dispose of. Be this as it may, the war has shown Brazil a way out of the financial morass into which the Government was plunged by the collapse of its main source of revenue, the duty on rubber, and it looks as if the Republic might do great things for herself, and for us of hungry Europe, in the beef line. Mr. Murdo Mackenzie thinks so, at all events, and as he is paid £10,000 a year to know all about cattle, his opinion is entitled to respect. Mr. Mackenzie is a braw Scot from Texas, with a kind face, an imperturbable calm of body and mind, and a firm faith in the future of Brazil in general and São Paulo in particular. The Brazil Land, Cattle and Packing Company, which he represents, owns a matter of five million acres of land in Brazil and another trifle of four millions or so in Bolivia—a good deal more land, in fact, than they could stock, and some of it wild and unworkable under present conditions. The American ranchmen who are teaching the Brazilians up-to-date cattle methods, believe in crossing the native stock of the country, the *gado crioulo*, with pure-bred Herefords or Shorthorns, in order to produce the high-class meat that the packers want. The results obtained at the experiment *fazendas* of Morongaba in Paraná and at Senhor Prado's model farm, "San Martino," in São Paulo, have certainly justified the introduction of foreign-blooded stock; nevertheless, many Brazilians hold that the thoroughbred native *caracu* is likely to pay better, because of its greater immunity from *garapata* and other insect pests,

to which the unacclimatised imported beasts often succumb.

The native types of cattle, *franquerio, curralleiro* and *caracu,* are the descendants of animals imported in colonial days from Portugal, freely crossed since then with Zebu stock from India. Their average quality is generally higher than was that of Argentine native cattle twenty years ago; it remains, therefore, to be proved that what the breeder may gain in quality of meat from crossing with European thoroughbreds, may not be counterbalanced by loss of stamina. The climate and insect pests of Brazil are factors in the problem not necessarily to be solved by applying the experience of Texas or Argentina. It remains also to be seen whether the packing factories' buying price for highly bred cattle will be so much higher, in the long run, than what they pay for *caracu* or other native stock, that it will encourage Brazilian ranchmen to devote time and money to extensive breeding experiments, and to the scientific culture of fattening pasturage.

Round about São Paulo, where most *fazendas* have until now been chiefly concerned with dairy farming, very good cattle have been obtained by crossing with Dutch, Flemish and Jersey strains. But the thoroughbred, hornless and soft-horn *caracu* stock is still in favour with many breeders. These animals are good milkers, hardy and of good weight. At Apparecida do Norte, four and a half hours by railway from São Paulo on the Rio line, there is a pasteurised Milk Factory, which collects milk from the *fazendas* of the district for the supply of the city. At the invitation of their hospitable owners, I spent some days visiting two typical ranches of this locality, a beautiful country of fat pasture land and semi-tropical timber, where the bamboo, used for boundary hedges, grows to a height of

twenty feet, impenetrably close, very useful and ornamental.

One of these, the *fazenda* San Raphael, lies midway between Apparecida and Guaratinguetá, another station on the Central Railway. These two small towns are united by a tram line, which strikes a stranger as curiously superfluous when first he contemplates the deliberate, not to say languid, movements of their inhabitants. Its explanation lies in the fact that Apparecida is a place of pilgrimage, the shrine of a certain miraculous statue to which, on holy days, the faithful come from far and near to pray. The number of the devout is not what it was under the Empire, but the festivals of the Church and the joys of a bustling pilgrimage still preserve their attractions in these rural communities where, outside of them, very little happens. One is reminded that the Church is no longer of the State and that its revenues and bequests have sadly diminished under the Republic, by the unfinished shell of a great building at Apparecida that was to have been a convent. The Government, they say, offered to take it over for use as a secular school, but the Bishop refused to traffic with the mammon of unrighteousness, so that, failing a spiritual revival of the kind which subscribes cash, the place is likely to remain a melancholy monument to the growth of materialism. But it is not only the would-be convent that remains void and silent in Apparecida. There are two factories in the town, one for making matches, the other for textile spinning, both ingloriously idle, behind closed doors; but not, it would seem, without profit to their far-seeing founders, nor without significance as to the bearing of politics on industrial enterprises, even in these apparently unsophisticated regions. If popular report speaks truly, both these factories receive compensation for remaining closed, from

Trusts which prefer a small output and high prices to cut-throat competition and a free market. The match factory started under the auspicious title of " O Progresso "; its owner being a brother of the President of the State of São Paulo, who gave the Company its concession. From the public point of view, a little healthy competition applied to the match trade monopoly might reasonably come under the heading of progress, but for the bureaucrat such an innovation would sap one of the main supports of profitable statecraft. All the same, one would like to know the inner history of the founding of this matchless factory.

The roads were impassable in and about Apparecida, as the result of heavy rains, so we reached the *fazenda* San Raphael by way of Guaratinguetá, where the surveyor of highways enjoys either ampler revenues or better luck. Judging by outward appearances, the local elders and guardians of this borough are entitled to credit for well-kept roads and other manifestations of civic virtue, including an excellent school. But the Cinema was there, as it seems to be everywhere, effectively frustrating all purposes of decent education; the walls of the town were placarded with its invitation to the citizens to revel in a film entitled " O Rapto do Venus." And even here the affairs of men were feeling the far-flung effects of the war. A harness-maker complained that he could no longer get leather, because certain French agents had been buying up all the local hides at absurd prices. Could not the distinguished Senhors assist him to secure a contract to supply the Allies with saddles and collars of superior quality? He could then afford to compete for hides. Even this unsophisticated trader had mastered the fundamental principle of war finance.

Land is cheap, amongst these foothills of São Paulo, as

compared with Argentine and Uruguay prices, and likely to remain so, as long as conditions in Europe continue to check the flow of emigration. The price of cattle is also considerably lower than in the south, though rising as the local *frigorifico* demand expands. Newly arrived Americans believe that there is a future for sheep and pig farming in the hill country round about and a good opening for capital with brains behind it, throughout all this district. Until now, however, sheep farming has not been a success. A few Englishmen have tried it, but given it up; the flocks did not thrive on the hill grass, and the casualties caused by jaguars and by various insect plagues were too heavy. But many experts maintain that, with scientific culture of pasture by burning, ploughing and sowing good grass, and with selected stock in well-fenced *potreros*, the business will yet be made to pay. To the inexperienced *gringo*, the climate of these hills seems admirably suited to sheep, but 'tis a beast of crotchety digestion, and nicely capricious in the matter of grass.

In 1916 the effect of the war was clearly manifest in the increasing cost of living, and particularly in the price of imported luxuries, throughout Brazil; amongst the poorer class of farm labourers, the pre-war scale of wages was no longer sufficient to provide food and clothing. An ordinary *fazenda* labourer in São Paulo, earning thirty milreis a month, was faced with problems similar to those which perplexed the working classes in England, but having no means for venting his grievances, he suffered the hard lot of the inarticulate. In the city of São Paulo the price of butter was four and a half milreis a kilo (roughly two shillings a pound), milk was sixpence a *litre*, eggs two shillings a dozen, rice fourpence and potatoes twopence a pound. Coal was at prohibitive prices and firewood extremely dear. Beef was about fourpence a pound,

mutton sevenpence halfpenny and pork sixpence. As the lowest coin in common circulation is 100 reis (even now more than a penny), high prices mean serious hardship for workers, whose wages are often less than two shillings a day. For the wealthier classes, the war only meant a curtailment of luxuries; fewer and dearer Paris clothes, no new motor-cars, a serious shortage of coal, and less petrol. The cost of champagne, generally a fair test of the scale of prices in polite society, was twenty-five milreis at the "Rôtisserie Sportsman," the fashionable restaurant of São Paulo, and thirty milreis at the exotic Monte Carlo *plaisance* of Guarujá.

To go down from the São Paulo tableland to Santos by the sea is to pass from a temperate climate to the tropics; in 1916 it also meant passing from the isolated detachment of the interior, to sights and sounds of the sea, that brought one back to consciousness of the war. There was still a good deal of German activity and influence at work at Santos in the spring of 1916. Up to that time, thanks to the curious disinclination of Downing Street to put its foot down firmly on enemy trading, German goods still continued to be imported in neutral, and even in British, ships, to the scandal of all decent men and the profit of inveterate free-traders. The Santos Trawler Company (originally a fishing enterprise in British hands, which passed under German control shortly before the war, and was eventually black-listed) was generally suspected of having rendered valuable services and information to German warships. The machinery that carries the never-ceasing stream of coffee-bags along the docks and to the ship-loading feeders at the berths was conspicuously German; the guttural accents of the Fatherland offended one's ears at the "Sportsman" restaurant and on the balconies of the big hotel on the beach. Such news of

the war as was to be found in the local papers was carefully attuned to the exigencies of a prudent neutrality. It is pleasant to think that in Brazil, at all events, the exponents of piratical Kultur have since then become alien enemies, and that it was their privilege to learn what the civilised world really thinks of Germany, some time before that knowledge was vouchsafed to the Fatherland.

Santos has a beautiful river approach, guarded by a venerable Portuguese fort, which time has mellowed to graceful conformity with its peacefully slumbering environment. The harbour, too, is beautiful, in its setting of luxuriant tropical vegetation, and the town, behind the bustling wharves, conveys an impression of unbroken siestas and serenity. There are trumpet-tongued newsvendors and rattling tramcars, as usual, in the main streets, but beyond these voices there is the peace of a people that has eaten of the lotus, which has learned the futility of haste, and the virtue of idleness unashamed. The houses are of the unpretentious Portuguese type, with stucco work and plaster, generally painted in bright colours; most of the shops have no windows, only wide doors that open inwards. The town, that was once a plague spot, is well drained and healthy enough; its mosquitoes are many and voracious, but their bite no longer means yellow fever. In the bathing season, the long curving beach, dotted with the villas of domesticity, is invaded by the high life of São Paulo, with its Paris fashions and limousines.

But for the everyday traveller, whether on pleasure or business bent, the charms of Santos are apt to pall. Whether you come from the northern hills or the southern seas, the place feels stuffy, its air heavy with the breath of decaying vegetation, suggestive of malaria, which clings to river banks in the tropics. Therefore, if you have a

day or two to pass here, waiting for a steamer, take the *barca* and cross the river to the spot on the opposite shore, whence a railway runs to Guarujá and its Palace of Enchantment by the sea. It is a toy railway, on which a locomotive of the type of Stephenson's "Rocket" pulls two cars on a raised trail through the densest of jungly swamp, with here and there a clearing of bananas and sugar-cane, until suddenly and without warning it emerges upon Trouville transplanted. There is something fantastically theatrical, almost impudent, in the spectacle of the huge hotel, all brilliantly lighted, as it comes upon you at dusk out of the heart of the dismal swamp, something aggressively incongruous in its paraphernalia of bathing machines, chalets, band-stands, casino and trim flower-beds. It is as if you met a ballet dancer in the depth of the desert. Magnificent, no doubt, but not war; you feel instinctively that this Temple of Fortune is nought but the baseless fabric of a dream, a fool's paradise, which must speedily be dissolved and engulfed between the jungle and the sea, and leave no trace behind. Already its wood and metal work bear testimony to the insidious havoc of the moist tropic air. Meanwhile, it is a very pleasant place in which to dream, lulled by the restful murmur of the rolling surf. The Casino season, during which the coffee kings and their women-folk come here to hold high revel at the sign of the spinning wheel, lasts only some six or seven weeks, and in that time the tables are expected to make profit enough to pay for the year's upkeep of the establishment and to give dividends to the enterprising capitalists who built it. Before the war, when South American society could travel in its wonted comfort and security, Guarujá in the season attracted a fashionable crowd of plungers and birds of Paradise, from Rio, Montevideo and Buenos Aires, but with the

war its glory and its profits departed, like those of Monte Carlo. As I saw it, in the dull season, the gambling (a little mild roulette at the Petit Casino) attracted only a handful of habitués from Santos; a few transient guests, mostly Englishmen, kept the torpid remnants of the hotel staff from succumbing to sleeping sickness. Seen thus, in the restful silence of drowsy noontides, and at night, when the fireflies danced to the music of the sea breeze in the palms, the exotic quality of the place and its garish ostentation were blissfully forgotten. Under the silver glimpses of the moon, its beauty became a thing ethereal, as of Arcady, the hotel an Elysian palace of dreams; and in the insidious charm of this fairy-tale oasis there lurked a special quality of ghostliness, an element of fearful joy, because of that untrodden jungle waste, that wilderness of dismal swamp and noisome creeping things, that lay so darkly threatening and so close.

# CHAPTER VI

## BUENOS AIRES

HERE and there, in the older narrower streets of its congested centre, Buenos Aires suggests fleeting memories of Colonial Spain; memories, too, of the days when the Paris of the New World was still a "camp" town, when the city fathers reckoned that a street was wide enough if a man could hitch his horse to the sidewalk without fear of its being hit by a passing *carococheˈ*.[1] Not so very remote, as time goes, those days, though the present generation with its busy wharves, trains and tramways, its broad boulevards, opulent suburbs, and cosmopolitan society, has almost forgotten them. It is only since 1880 that the Argentine *hinterland* has been open to the "starvelings of the Old World," as Hudson has it, to the tide of Italian, German and Polish peasant immigrants who have ploughed their prosperous way across the great pampean plains, from the Atlantic to the Andes. Until 1879, when the Government of the Republic ordered General Rosa to enlarge the boundaries and justify the purposes of civilisation, by getting rid of the aborigines, the white man's country that lay behind Buenos Aires, Rosario, Concordia and other outposts of colonial days was but a thinly settled strip of territory conquered from

[1] Just as the English founders of the Model Settlement at Shanghai in the 'fifties thought that its streets were wide enough when there was room for two tea-carrying coolies to pass each other.

the Indians. The rest was still their happy hunting-grounds.

In its broader aspects, the capital of to-day is less Spanish, even less Latin, than the cities of the interior. The silent years that lie between the coming of the Conquistadores of the fifteenth century and the polyglot invasion of the twentieth, have left their mark upon the life of the " camp " towns all over the country, not easily to be effaced by the flowing tide of new men and new ways. But Buenos Aires is become essentially cosmopolitan, after the manner of New York, a place of feverish commerce, where (except in the conservative world of officialdom) the Spaniards' good old *mañana* philosophy has gone down before the assaults of German clerks, cash registers, telephones and other pernicious inventions of Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic hustling. There is scarcely time in the business world of Buenos Aires for a decent siesta, no leisure for maté drinking, no discussing the details of the latest scandal or the political situation as preliminaries to a leisurely bargain. Over the way, across the river, in Montevideo, where the voice of the seventeenth century still echoes faintly in the ears of men and quite distinctly in the hearts of women, there may be time for such amenities; but Buenos Aires, unmistakably destined to become the greatest emporium of a hungry world's food buyers and sellers, is the gathering place of those for whom time is money, a centre of frenzied finance, a place of bustling business and cosmopolitan activity.

In its cosmopolitanism, and in the outward and visible signs of its gigantic commerce, the city resembles New York, but it possesses its own distinctive qualities of spaciousness, of free-handed affluence; an exuberant atmosphere suggestive of the land flowing with milk

and honey, of the superabundance of flocks and herds, of corn and wine, that lie behind it. Fifty years ago, when there were more farmers than "base mechanicals" in the United States, New York displayed this same quality of spaciousness, the easy-going optimism which distinguished the well-stocked seller from the hungry buyer. But since then, while the industrial nations at the centres of European civilisation have become more and more dependent on the resources of the "Pampas and Savannahs," North America (with a doubled population, rapidly industrialised) has been added to the long list of competitors for the Argentine's surplus food. The wharves, *frigoríficos* and grain elevators of Buenos Aires carry the message, plain-writ for all who have eyes to see, namely, that the surplus food resources of South America are destined to bring to Argentina more and more of the Old World's hoarded wealth, and of the luxuries and vanities in which wealth expresses itself. During the last hundred years the social and economic burdens of Europe have been vastly multiplied by reason of the unprecedented increase of population which has resulted from the transient prosperity of urban industrialism, assisted by new methods of food transportation. Civilisation at its centre has been living freely on its capital, bringing into the world millions of lives for whose fitting maintenance the world's diminishing fertility offers less and ever less provision. The next half-century is bound to witness a steady transference of economic power from the centre to the circumference, from the lands that must buy food and raw materials to the less populated fertile countries that have these things to sell. Amongst these, South America stands easily first. And so the whirligig of Time brings about its revenges; the continent that was plundered of its gold and silver by

the Conquistadores, that since has lain fallow and almost forgotten of the conquerors, is destined to become an Eldorado richer than that of any buccaneer's imaginings, and to exact vast tribute from the Old World.

Buenos Aires bears evidence to the rapidity of the process; affluence, actual and increasing, is the keynote of the impression that the city conveys in all its moods and tenses. And because Argentina is essentially a white man's country, capital, and the captains of industry who handle capital, have foregathered here, not as transient *concessionnaires*, but as resident citizens. This makes the community of commerce and enterprise even more cosmopolitan than that of New York, though, for reasons that I have never heard explained, the Hebrew of high and low finance is less ubiquitous and less dominant than one would expect him to be in this land, where money and prodigals are plentiful. The Speyers and the Meyers, the Blumenthals and Rosenbaums are here, of course, but their names do not encompass you on every side as in Broadway, nor do they seem to have acquired the same stranglehold on banking and business that they have in New York, Johannesburg, London and other chief marketplaces of the Gentiles. Why is it that the vastly lucrative *pulperia* business of money-lending is left all through the country to Spaniards, Italians and Basques? Is it the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, or the rigidity of South America's social barriers, that frightens the children of Israel from this land of promise? These be mysteries.

English, Scotch and Irish, Italians, Spaniards, Germans and Poles, Frenchmen and Basques, Greeks and the various breeds of Levantines who in these regions are collectively classed as "Turcos," all these go to the making of the conglomerate cosmopolis of modern Argentina; but the

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features which distinguish the social life, business and sports of the capital, wheresoever they depart from Spanish tradition, are very markedly British. In literature, philosophy, and to a certain extent in politics, the Argentine is inspired by French ideals. France, the fountain-head of Latin civilisation, is his spiritual home, and the fact has been emphasised by the war, despite the pro-German activities of the clerical faction and of politicians with overdrafts in German banks. But in other directions the prevailing influence is conspicuously English. Your Argentine blade gets his clothes from London, owns an. English terrier, decorates his walls with English pictures, knows all about football, and belongs to a rowing club. The swell shops in Florida are full of English goods and, next to Spanish, English is the language of commerce. All this is very grateful, an abiding testimony to the virtue of those pioneers of bygone days, traders and *estancieros*, who built on sure foundations the tradition of the *palabra d'Ingles*. Very comforting, too, is the disappearance, since the war, of German goods from all their former coigns of vantage, and the hope that hereafter British trade and enterprise may be greatly extended and consolidated in this country, as the result of the widespread antipathy which the Teuton has aroused.

But there is a fly in the ointment of this hope, a fly born in Manchester, bred in the dark places of its cosmopolitan free-trade. If the German is to be made to expiate his sins as he should, if he is to be prevented from working back on his mole-like tracks to the undermining of British enterprise, he must no longer be encouraged in the pernicious belief that his "English friends" are disposed to allow him to resume his business of peaceful penetration. In Buenos Aires, even more than in Rio, he has been justified in his cautious opportunist neutrality

by our own Board of Trade and Foreign Office, whose inexplicable reluctance to put an end to enemy trading during the early days of the war enabled the German merchant to hold on in á situation from which he might otherwise have been completely ousted before the end of 1915. It may seem incredible, yet it is nevertheless true, that until the middle of 1916 a great deal of business for Germans in South America was actually financed from London. As *The Times* correspondent to Buenos Aires stated at the beginning of the year, "Up till now German firms here have been as free to trade with British firms, and British firms at home with local German houses here, as if there had been no declaration of war and no Orders in Council." Patriotic Englishmen at home and abroad spoke bitterly about "the hidden hand," and wondered by what means the powers of darkness were able to maintain their evil influence in high places, but as a matter of fact, there has never been any real secret as to the nature of the sordid cosmopolitan creed professed by the pro-German faction at the centre of the Empire, nor any possible doubt as to the power exercised in political circles by naturalised Germans and German Jews in high finance. It was only when it became clear that the United States intended the join the alliance against Germany that an efficient censorship was established between Great Britain and South America, and the Black List instituted to curtail the activities of German traders and their "neutral" friends. But ever since then, Germany's good free-trading friends in England have been able to help her to keep her place in the sun, and indirectly to supply German traders in South America with Manchester goods. At the end of March 1918, at the very moment when Germany was staking all on a supreme attempt to overwhelm the British Army

and destroy the British Empire, the same *Times* correspondent reported that the beneficial results of the measures taken against German trade had been "largely nullified by the action of the British Government." That action, as he explained, served the purposes of the German in two ways. In the first place, it allowed "Turkish importers"—*i. e.* Syrians and Levantine Jews and other nondescripts—to continue to receive Manchester textiles, which meant that the German dealer would receive them indirectly and undersell his competitors to keep up his trade. In the second place, it removed the names of a number of German firms, *among them several of the most prominent*, from the South American Black List "without consulting the local authorities and apparently regardless of the deplorable effect upon local allied and neutral opinion."

To those of us who have witnessed the effects of government by lawyers and plutocrats on our policies overseas, who have seen honest English officials in Consulates and Legations compelled to act upon orders that made them ashamed to look their countrymen in the face, there was nothing for wonder, little even for criticism, in the prudent neutrality of countries like Argentina. Every one at Buenos Aires knew, after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and still more after the revelation of Count Luxburg's diplomatic activities, that the sympathies of the vast majority of Argentinos were with the Allies. But they were also aware that public opinion in the Republic possesses comparatively little influence with the Government, partly because politics in this "democracy," as in many others, is a game which the workers generally leave to the talkers, the producer to the professional politician. Public opinion in this case expressed itself frequently and freely in denouncing the pro-German

neutrality of Señor Presidente Irigoyen and his followers; it "demonstrated" and shouted in favour of the Allies on feast days and other occasions; but it never went to the length of organising an effective political opposition to the President's passivity or of putting a stop to the pernicious activities of the Germans and their hirelings.

The deluded idealists and party politicians in England, who have prated and preached about "conciliating" Sinn Fein and persuading Ireland's rebel faction, by graceful concessions, to become loyal and law-abiding citizens, may be interested to learn that in South America, and particularly in the Argentine, the cause of the Allies was never more openly opposed, the side of Germany never more openly espoused, than by a certain section of the Roman Catholic Irish. These men, many of them naturalised Argentinos and prosperous settlers, have preserved, even unto the second and third generation, all the characteristics of the priest-ridden, turbulent, ignorant peasantry, whose perverse hatred of all constituted authority is the real curse of Ireland; the plotting of disloyalty and the brooding over ancient fantastic grudges are inbred in their bones, unreasoning racial animosity the very breath of their nostrils. It was not enough for these traitors to the common cause of civilisation that Ireland should have been scandalously pampered by British politicians, relieved from bearing her share of the Empire's burden of war, exempted from food rations, war taxation and the defence of the realm. From their place of comfortable security, they continued to satisfy their atavistic instincts of tribal warfare and to conform to Ireland's pitiful traditions of sordid conspiracy and religious bigotry. I will cite merely one instance of their activities. On the 20th of June, 1916, at the Irish Roman Catholic Chapel at Rosario, a Mass was

celebrated under the auspices of the St. Patrick's Society "in memory of the dead who fell fighting for the freedom of their country in April and May"—not, mark you, of the Irishmen who had fallen on the battlefields of France to preserve Europe (and incidentally Ireland) from the heel of the Hun, but of those who had met their fate after murdering British soldiers in the streets of Dublin. Describing this interesting ceremony, the *Irish Monthly* (a German subsidised rag published in Buenos Aires) deplored the absence of a number of influential members of the St. Patrick's Society; the entertainment was undoubtedly calculated to attract prosperous renegades. One Father Stechy, assisted by Father Murray (O.S.F.), said the Mass in the Chapel deeply draped, and thereafter a card, printed in Spanish, was distributed amongst the faithful, announcing the death "due to a serious attack 'Germanofilo,' comforted by holy shells and torpedoes, of the *Queen Mary, Indefatigable, Invincible, Black Prince, Warrior, Princess Royal*, etc., etc." The imperishable quality of Irish humour was manifested in the statement that "Lord Kitchener would not attend the funeral, having gone to inspect British submarines at the bottom of the North Sea." Well might the anonymous author conclude with "God save Ireland!" And well may any sane, self-respecting Irishman, sick of its priest-ridden, drink-sodden politics, despair of salvation for the distressful country, so long as the United Kingdom continues to be governed by opportunist demagogues. Our present ills are not to be cured by Home Rule for Ireland, but rather by pogroms of shifty politicians in England. Fortunately for the Argentine, there are not enough Irish of the scheming, trouble-breeding kind within her borders to debauch her internal politics as for years they debauched those of the United States.

I do not mean by this to suggest that either national or municipal politics in the Argentine are conducted exclusively by Bayards and Galahads—far from it. But such unwholesome fruits as result here from the graft of modern socialism on to the sturdy stem of Latin republicanism, are at least free from the sordid, corner-saloon, vice-forming features which have come to be identified with the activities of Hibernian politics in North America. Here, as in our European democracies, politics is become a profession unattractive to men of punctilious honesty and fastidious conscience; a necessary business, no doubt, but unpleasant. In the Argentine, as in Uruguay, your average decent citizen speaks of politicians much in the same way that he speaks of locusts. He accepts them and all their works as evils to be endured, because experience has shown him that a change of government is merely a new and expensive shuffle of the same old greasy pack. The game itself never changes.

It is evident that there must be public offices and men to fill them, a public purse and men to empty it; but in South America, as in England, the game of exploiting the community in the sacred name of democracy has become too obviously transparent, and the number of hands that demand access to the till is, therefore, continually being increased from the ranks of the thriftless and the inefficient. These and their dependents, and all those who hope to derive benefits, direct or indirect, from office-holders, form a body of citizens by no means inconsiderable. At election time—there was a Presidential election in April 1916—the stranger within the gates of Argentina might be led by their tumults and shoutings to think that the entire population takes an intelligent interest in the business of government, and possesses a fitting sense of responsibility in the exercise of the fran-

chise. But, bless you, the interest that the average non-official takes in the Presidential election is much the same as that which he takes in a horse-race, except that attendance at races is optional, whereas if he declines to vote at elections the State fines him ten dollars. In reality, he no more controls the nomination and election of those who will dispose of the public purse and patronage for the next six years, than the deluded folk who shout themselves hoarse at the bidding of the party-machine in Great Britain. But the tub-thumpers and gargoyles of the contending factions loudly assure him that he does, and a well-nourished Press keeps up the pleasant illusion of a representative Government freely chosen by an enlightened electorate. As a matter of fact, and as the result of applying our crude ideals of democracy to communities untrained in the duties of citizenship, the spoils system in politics is carried here (as in other American Republics) to a more logical and straightforward conclusion than with us. When a President's term of office expires in Argentina, not only do all the Ministers of his Government vacate their offices and retire with their secretaries, protégés and satellites, but all the chief municipal dignitaries—Police, Post Office, Public Health, etc.—must also resign. Thus the world-wide game of Ins and Outs, of Haves and Have-nots, is played once every six years, with the public purse as prize, and for a few brief riotous days nearly every one is more or less concerned, in pocket or in prospect, with the shuffling of the executive pack.

At the time of the celebration of Argentina's centenary of independence, the country had but recently recovered from one of the most keenly contested elections in its history. The usual machine-made differences between Reds and Whites, between Ins and Outs, had on this

occasion been supplemented by a real difference, which appealed to something higher than the pocket of many a citizen, namely, the question whether the Republic should have a pro-German or a pro-Ally Government. There is no doubt whatsoever that had the country been in a position to vote on this issue only, Señor Irigoyen and his Radical friends would never have obtained a majority of the votes of the Electoral Colleges; but the war was a long way off, and the glib politicians were able to divert the voter's sympathetic glance from France and Belgium by directing it towards new and highly attractive pictures of loaves and fishes. So the Radicals came into power, backed by the clericals and a highly organised German propaganda, though by this time the name of German had begun to stink in the nostrils of every decent Argentino. Thus is representative government based on universal suffrage in a modern democracy. The Centenary celebrations emphasised in more ways than one the transient and precarious nature of the satisfaction which the system affords to Demos himself. With the exception of one thoroughgoing partisan, who endeavoured to give the populace genuine cause for rejoicing by shooting at the President, the acts of the apostles of democracy, the manifestations of politician orators and organisers, were curiously lacking in enthusiasm, not to say conviction. There were patriotic speeches, of course, by National Deputies in the Plaza San Martin, torchlight processions (the torches were forgotten) and other "*demonstraciones por el glorioso aniversario,*" but somehow they all seemed to be even more perfunctory and artificial than such things usually are. The oratory was sonorous and dramatic enough, and the procession business was done, as the Latin only can do it, with a certain dignity, artistically suggestive of some worthy purpose; but there was nothing

in the attitude of the crowd to create the impression that the pulse of the nation was beating any faster than usual, or that any statesman had got his finger on it.

The narrow ways of Florida, San Martin, Maipú and Reconquista, all gay bedecked with flags and arched festoons of electric lights, reminded one of the business quarter of a Chinese city. At the height of the festivities the crowds were packed so tightly in these fashionable streets that movement became impossible. Even in normal times, carriage traffic can only use them in one direction, for the cross streets—Cangallo, Corrientes, etc.—are equally narrow; so that to get to any particular spot you frequently have to drive round an entire "block," and if you look like a stranger, Jehu will generally throw in an extra block or two for luck. In the Avenida Florida, all vehicular traffic ceases at four o'clock in the afternoon, in order that pedestrians have a chance to "circulate," which with one accord they decline to do. On the contrary, half the population seems to have acquired a fixed habit of giving and taking the day's news, with occasional refreshment, in this its favourite street. Talking of favourite streets, there is something pathetic in the fearful monotony of their names, all over South America. From Panamá to Patagonia, the Conscript Fathers, or whosoever is responsible for these things, appear to have exhausted all the resources of their historical knowledge and patriotic imagination when they have christened their chief Plaza with the date of the Republic's Independence or Constitution, and their streets by the names of neighbouring provinces or prominent politicians. It would seem as if the entire history of South America began and ended with the birth of its Republics, and their subsequent puerperal fever; as if the nostrums of the modern demagogue had consigned art

and literature to oblivion, together with the great epics of the Spanish navigators and Conquistadores. Stout Cortes, Columbus and Cervantes, Pizarro and Mendoza are all forgotten; there is scarcely a narrow *calle* of the suburbs to do them reverence. Even the sleepy rustic townlets of the " campo " call their Plaza " 25 de Mayo."

From the speeches of the orators of the Centenary celebration, and the general tenor of the patriotic festivities, I gathered that the fundamental cause for Argentina's rejoicings lay in having thrown off the yoke of Spain, together with all the foolishness of Europe's effete monarchical traditions and mediæval superstitions. The Republic, it appears, has lighted the lamp of Liberty with the oil of democracy and its brightness of felicity is ensured, henceforth and for ever, on a basis of equality and fraternity. That any freeborn citizen should think it necessary to demonstrate his feelings on an occasion of this kind by shooting at the President, would appear to indicate the presence of flies in the democratic amber. And there were others: for example, the local Press vaunted itself on the fact that the street illuminations had cost $300,000; they made little or no mention of the fact that the Municipality was heavily in debt to the Gas Company (a British concern), and that the City Fathers were evidently relying on the Monroe doctrine or a German victory to evade their obligations. Much eloquence was devoted to extolling the city's civic splendours; deputies and delegates spoke melodiously on this theme during the four days of the *fiesta*, but nobody appeared to attach any importance to the fact that the street scavengers had just gone on strike to secure a living wage. The educational activities of the Republic were emphasised in processions, exercises and games, and rightly so, for taken as a whole, liberal education stands at a high level in most of the

South American Republics. Nevertheless, on the evening of Sunday, the 5th of July, chief day of the *fiesta*, I witnessed the performance of a play (*Articulo 7*, it was called) at the Theatre Royal, grossly and stupidly indecent to a degree which no civilised community of effete Europe would tolerate, a mixture of bawdry and buffoonery, only equalled by the exhibitions of the local picture-palaces and calculated to nullify all the uplifting efforts of the best-intentioned teachers.

Doubtless, to the eye of the well-fed wayfarer, these festivities of the young Republic, with all its vast resources of undeveloped wealth, might well portend a new world made prosperously safe for democracy. What other land on this hard-worked and anxious planet could close its Custom House and its Post Office for three hilarious days of feasts and torchlight processions, taking no thought for the morrow? They will tell you at the Jockey Club that there are no beggars in Buenos Aires (it is true that the only one I met was an English beachcomber), but they cannot shut their eyes to the unpleasant fact that socialism, of a type very nearly akin to Bolshevism, lies very near to the surface of local politics, endemic and malignant. The anti-social activities of Polish Jews are just as dangerous in the New World as in the Old. *Cœlum non animum mutant.* To have thrown off the yoke of mediæval monarchical Spain is, no doubt, an achievement; to live in a land of spacious fruitfulness is to be favoured of the gods. But can any one who contemplates Demos in South American cities, restless, wayward, full of windy words, say truthfully that the average citizen has come much nearer to the source of happiness than the veriest beggar who suns himself on the steps of the Cathedral in old Seville, or the ladrones of the Barcelona waterside?

Certain things stand out, distinct in their significance, against the blurred background of my brief days in Buenos Aires. These, in the order of their importance, are, the Jockey Club, the Cattle Show at Palermo, and Count Luxburg, in splendid isolation at the Plaza Hotel. Each, in its way, throws a little light on the peculiarities of the great southern city's politics and social evolution; in a sense they stand respectively for typical local manifestations of the world, the flesh and the devil.

The Jockey Club is a sermon in stone for those who have eyes to see, a striking testimony to the wisdom of old Socrates which foretold the perils of a democracy unrestrained by an aristocracy of character and intelligence. The lesson conveyed by this gilded palace of plutocrats is particularly significant, now in the time of our mortal life when the Old World, looking to democracy for salvation, has seen it in Russia transformed before its very eyes into a bloodthirsty gang of plundering tyrants. For here, on virgin soil, democracy started with a clean slate, free to work out its salvation and to find the promised Utopia, having cast off all the tradition and trammels of autocracy with the yoke of Spain. And what is the result? A distribution of wealth more unequal than that of Europe, and the growth of a plutocracy possessed of greater opportunities and greater power than any class of aristocrats in the Old World. Here, in a land which professes to be ultra-democratic, in a Republic ostensibly founded on principles of liberty, fraternity and equal opportunity, an exclusive plutocratic clique systematically exploits the nation's ruling passion for gambling, and neither the law nor public opinion seems to take any exception to the arrangement. Over the way, n Montevideo, the same strange apathy exists in the matter of public gambling encouraged by the Government,

which at the same time professes to be guiding the Republic straight to Utopia, by the way of Señor Battlé's super-socialistic theories.

The Jockey Club gets 10 per cent. of the totalisator receipts at the Palermo Races, and as they have races every Sunday and Thursday, the Committee have to exercise a good deal of ingenuity to spend the money and at the same time to maintain the hidalgo exclusiveness represented by a $3000 entrance fee. To become a member is the ambition of every successful Argentino, but if report speaks truly, the blackball moves here with a discrimination worthy of the best haunts of an esoteric aristocracy, and no less irritating to its victims. The Club premises are the last word in opulence, a little florid perhaps—opulence of the kind which seeks solid comfort embellished by the artistic temperament—but undeniably magnificent; a joy for ever to the diplomats and other honorary members who tread these marble halls and eat these dainty meals at a cost that may be called nominal, as things go in the Argentine. As for me, while I gaze reverently on the gorgeous pictures, tapestries and old porcelain that adorn this home of Dives, while I walk humbly through its *salle d'escrime*, its baths and all the cosy corners where well-fed Crœsus takes his ease, I see, behind and beyond these things, those which have made them—the Gauchos trooping their slow-moving herds, the endless, strenuous labour of the "camp," the pampas slowly yielding to the plough—and I wonder whether, as the politicians say, democracy will ever devise and establish a world-wide state of society in which the labourer shall not only be worthy of his hire, but shall enjoy a fair share of the fruits of his labour. There has certainly been nothing in the recent record of Demos, from China to Peru, to justify confidence in the Wilsonian

type of academic optimism or to lead one to believe that, when the world has been made quite safe for democracy, the strong will cease to prey upon the weak, the clear-headed to exploit the brainless, and the thrifty to profit by the foolishness of the spendthrift.

At the Palermo Cattle Show I saw a champion bull, bought for sixty thousand dollars by Señor Drabble. The placid beast showed no sign of interest in the admiring crowd; from out his monstrous bulk of heavy flesh his pensive eye gazed upon the beauty and fashion of Buenos Aires in mild abstraction; no praise of cattle kings could move him from his sadly contemplative mood. All these Pashas of the bovine aristocracy are purposely fattened for the exhibition, and then must go into training to reduce their weight before they become serviceable for stud work. It seems an absurd arrangement, until you recollect that the final end of all this exhibition of the blue blood of pedigree beasts and all the activities of cattle kings is to produce food, ever more and more food, for the hungry town-bred masses of Europe's congested civilisation. The more layers of fat these beasts can accumulate, the better the immediate chances of square meals for London, Paris and Vienna. Thus seen, all the herds of the Pampas represent so much Bovril and Oxo, so many sides of beef, standing yet a little while between Europe's improvident industrialism and the disastrous penalties of its purblind economic sins.

For me, the thought of the *saladero*—that awful place of never-ending slaughter—is unpleasantly near to the surface at an exhibition of this kind. I have an uneasy feeling that the beasts know all about it; I see a dumb reproach in their far-gazing eyes. Out in the " campo," moving amongst accustomed things, busy with their own ruminations, the menace of man is remote from them,

his visitations brief. There I can look upon them without feelings of compunction, but here I feel as if I should like to apologise to them in some way for humanity in general. So let us leave the stalled beasts and visit him who hath dominion over them, in the person of the auctioneer, now conducting a very rapid and remunerative business in the sale ring. A very voluble person was the *rematador*, on this occasion member of a firm with the highly appropriate name of Bullrich & Co. His patter was like hailstones on a corrugated iron roof, " domil-domil; beedup-beedup," breathless and incessant; to judge by his fierce rapid gesture, his beseechings and ironic running commentary on the parsimony or apathy of buyers, he might have been selling high explosives instead of Herefords and Durhams. At all events, a highly efficient auctioneer, and typical in his way of the infusion of Anglo-Saxon business methods, of a certain liveliness, which distinguishes men and affairs in Buenos Aires from those of the easy-going towns of the interior, more faithful to the Spanish tradition.

Count Luxburg, of " Spurlos versenkt." fame, remains a curiously prominent figure in my impressions of Buenos Aires in 1916, for several reasons. One is that I had known him ten years before as Secretary of the German Legation at Peking, and had then had occasion to learn, at no small cost, what depths of treacherous guile lay beneath his suave, dilettante manner and *faux bonhomme* urbanity. In those days he cultivated a sort of British Guardsman style of dress and deportment, a pretty taste in Rhine wines, and a hobby for Oriental carpets, but for all that he was an unmistakable Junker to the tips of his slim fingers. Having studied him at close range and watched his honest broker methods of advancing Deutschland über Alles amongst the Chinese, it was interesting and in keeping with the fitness of things to find him here, all his

airs and graces gone, the leader and forlorn hope of Deutschdum on a continent where the name of Germany had already begun to stink in the nostrils of all honest men. Having many friends in the Argentine Government and in the Clerical party, and plenty of money to spend in proclaiming the certainty of Germany's ultimate victory, he was not yet disposed—as he became after the "Spurlos versenkt" incident—to walk humbly, or even to be polite. On the contrary, secure in the protection of Argentina's neutrality, he swaggered and blustered in true Junker fashion; but it was obviously the bravado of a bully, desperately afraid. He showed none of the cool, cynical effrontery which helped Bernstorff to remain dignified even in disgrace. Luxburg, surrounded by a group of faithful henchmen in the hall of the Plaza Hotel, was given to much boastful talking and truculent glaring at any English or Frenchman who might be present, but the man was none the less evidently rattled and ratty. He had bluntly declined to act upon the Plaza manager's polite suggestion that he should remove himself and his entourage from the hotel. Every ingenious device to dislodge him had failed, but splendid isolation was telling on his nerves. He behaved like a bear with a sore head, and in that rôle provided much pleasant entertainment for those who gathered at the Plaza, for the five-o'clock *thés dansants*. On one occasion he made a tremendous scene because he had overheard some one talking about the Boche; on another he declined to go up in the lift with a member of the British Legation, and was accordingly left foaming with rage, the centre of a scene that became suddenly charged with innocent merriment. In public and in private this fretful representative of Kultur dragged his dismal coat-tails, looking for the trouble which in the end overtook him. Anything and every-

thing that offended his nice German sense of honour became the subject of indignant protest to the Argentine Government. He complained, for instance, that the German flag had been left out in the great tableau of the performance of *Excelsior* at the Colon. The theatre authorities made suitable amends at the next performance by having two small German ensigns brought in at the tail of the procession by lads in Chinese costume. Then he complained of the performance of the *Cadeau de Noël,* and the Government had the play withdrawn.

Sweet are the uses of neutrality. There is no doubt whatsoever that, until the United States came into the fray, and until the seamy side of Luxburg's diplomacy was revealed in the "Spurlos versenkt" despatches, Señor Irigoyen and his friends effectively tempered the wind to the shorn German lamb. But those were the sad, bad days, when the Argentine politician believed in the invincibility of the German army and trimmed his prudent course accordingly, when the extremely cautious neutrality of the Buenos Aires Press justified its deference to the feelings of the Hun by reference to its "very conservative *clientèle,*" and by emphasising the benefits which Argentina might expect to derive after the war from German trade. Even Señor Mitre, of the *Nacion,* I remember, declined a suggestion that they should publish some of Raemaeker's cartoons, on the ground that they would annoy his Conservative subscribers. Argentine neutrality, in fact, was purely a matter of business, into which no sentiment was allowed to intrude. Well and good; but, as I ventured to observe to Señor Mitre at the time, if all the eloquence which Argentina has devoted to splendid ideals of civilisation and the rights of humanity, faded thus into oblivion when confronted with business, if the signature of the Republic on the Hague Conventions was

nothing more than a pious expression of irresponsible opinion, what will be the position of Argentina at the next gathering of the family of nations?

Before bidding farewell to Buenos Aires, let me record one pleasing and instructive little scene of which I happened to be a spectator. In the street in front of Harrod's replica of the Brompton Road Stores, I noticed that the crowd was more than usually congested, and that all its attention was directed to the shop windows, which, in the fashionable promenade of Florida, was noteworthy. The centre of attraction, I discovered, lay in a group of new dress-model dummies, lifelike waxen beauties of the type which has been created in recent years, so delicate and dainty in their pale loveliness that, remembering the simpering horrors of the shop windows of our youth, one would wish to raise a monument in honour of their unknown creator, that nameless benefactor of the human race. These peerless specimens at Harrod's, arranged in all the glory of the latest Paris fashions, were fascinating enough to evoke unrest and invidious comparisons in the bosom of most male Argentinos and fierce longings in the breast of their women-folk. "Caramba," said a tall young Gaucho to his campanero, "*porque no hay mujeres como estas aqui?*" Not that the smart women of Buenos Aires have much to learn in the way of dress—in their own way they are as chic as any in the world—but the tall, voluptuous figures of these waxen queens, their expression of patrician hauteur tempered by roguish allurements, their blue eyes and dainty curls—well, they may be good business, but I am not sure that in the long run it would not pay better to design Spanish-type dummies for the South American market. What is the good of arousing in highly susceptible breasts hopes that can never —or hardly ever—be realised?

As a matter of fact, women of the smart set in Buenos Aires are ahead of the London and Paris fashions—to their no small satisfaction—for the simple reason that Europe's summer models are generally designed in Paris in December and reach Buenos Aires in January or February, that is to say, in time for the summer season of the Argentine. The wealthy fashionables of the New World are very fashionable indeed, and in the matter of dress, as in everything else, they seem to esteem things chiefly for their costliness. Cheapness they despise; any shopkeeper will tell you that it does not pay to recommend low-priced goods. The higher the prices, the sweller the shop, and the more satisfactory the lordly buyer. Small wonder that life is expensive, where luxuries are concerned, in this land of swift fortunes and open-handed prodigality. The scale of wages is correspondingly high for all domestic service amongst the town dwellers; a kitchen wench, raw from a farm in Lombardy, will earn fifty dollars a month, and a chauffeur £300 a year and all found. Nevertheless, taking it all round, the cost of living was no dearer here in 1916 than in New York or Petrograd before the war; it is certainly lower to-day than in Montevideo, for the reason that the Uruguayan gold dollar is worth about two and a half times as much as the Argentine silver peso. In such matters as hotel charges, public conveyances, gambling, lottery tickets, laundry bills, the Argentine dollar seems to go almost as far as the Uruguayan, so that if you reckon your expenditure in sterling, Montevideo is a good deal more expensive than Buenos Aires. For example, a taxicab driver in Montevideo (with his taximeter permanently out of order) asks you a peso (say, 4*s.* 6*d.*) for five minutes' drive in his rickety old box of tricks. The Buenos Aires man will charge you a peso worth 1*s.* 9*d.* for about the same distance. Montevideo's laundry

charges, calculated in sterling, are only equalled by those of a fashionable hotel in Paris; so much so, that one can only conclude that the bulk of the population must do their family washing on the back premises.[1] Hotels in Montevideo are nothing to write home about, but the cost of a room at the best of them is not much less than at the Plaza in Buenos Aires—about £1 a day for a good room with bath. Somehow or other, Buenos Aires has acquired a legendary reputation for being the most expensive place on earth; all I can say from personal experience is that there are many cities on both sides of the Atlantic which take it out of you just as thoroughly, if not more so.

Enough of cities. From their pomps and vanities let us away to the wilds, to Paraguay, the sore stricken, and the fringe of the Chaco Austral.

[1] Very possibly they do. Spanish women are all artists *de natura* at laundry work, which may account for the price they set upon it. In Buenos Aires their handiwork is as immaculate as in Madrid, which is saying a great deal.

A " CARNE CON CUERRO," ARGENTINA

*To face p.* 11

## CHAPTER VII

### UP THE PARANÁ: A GLIMPSE OF THE CHACO AUSTRAL

THERE are more ways than one of reaching Paraguay and the city of Asunçion. Bold spirits and explorers may follow the old northern and western war tracks from Bolivia or Brazil, and rough it there to their heart's content. But for weaker vessels handicapped by age or fixed habits of sleeping and eating, the best starting-point is Buenos Aires. Thence you may go by railway, in thirty-six hours, or by river-boat up the Paraná, which last is a matter of four or five days, according to the state of the weather, the ship's engines, the amount of traffic at the ports of call, and the remnant of spasmodic energy abiding in the cargo-purser. As a rule only such unfortunate persons as have goods to sell or debts to collect in a hurry, or New Yorkers obsessed by the incurable time-saving delusion, elect to go by railway. Apart from the physical pains and penalties of that rough road, no traveller with any sense of the fitness of things, none who would rightly conciliate the tutelary spirits of this lotus-eating land, should approach Asunçion at anything more rapid than the steamer's eight miles an hour. During the hundred and odd hours of the leisurely progress of the river-boat, watching the banks go slowly by, with their struggling settlements and little clearings standing out pathetically, like brief visions of Arcadia, against the everlasting wilderness of jungle and swamp; studying the words and works of the strangely interesting *mestizo* race that has sprung from

the admixture of Iberian and Indian blood; above all, learning to realise something of the immense silent force and fertility of subtropical plant life, an incalculable factor in the history of this part of the continent; this, surely, is the right and seemly way to pass from the bustling modernity of Buenos Aires to the silent places, haunted of dreams that never yet came true, at the heart of South America. Furthermore, to create the atmosphere proper to the study of Paraguay and her remnant people, the searcher after knowledge may profitably beguile the leisure of these drowsy ship-board days by reading Father Dobrixhoffer's *History of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay*, and Cunninghame Graham's *Vanished Arcadia*.

In the estuary of the Rio de la Plata, and in many a long stretch of the Paraná, this river travel reminds one forcibly of the Yangtsze-kiang in summer. The water has the same pea-soup quality; there are the same shoals and banks of silted loess and the same swift changes of temperature, dependent on the direction of the wind. China is over-populated, and the Yangtsze's banks swarm with pullulating humanity, wheresoever cultivation is possible; Paraguay is a land of grim silences, a wilderness that stands untrodden and untamed, as it stood when first Sebastian Cabot and De Solis ascended the Paraná. Nevertheless, in both lands one is oppressed by an ever-present sense of the inscrutable destinies of man, of the eternal and apparently meaningless mystery of the struggle for life on this ever-warring planet. In both one comes to sympathise, as by a sense intuitive, with the stoic fatalism which characterises the peoples of these far-divided continents; the one so old, the other so new, as measured by man-recorded time. Here, just as in Far Cathay, life is cheap and time of no account.

From Reconquista northwards to the river Bermejo, skirting the lagoons and thickly-wooded shore of the Chaco Austral, you have time and to spare for meditation; to dream and picture to yourself the life of this land in those far-distant days when, after the passing of the Conquistadores, the Jesuits established their Arcadian Commonwealth amongst the Guaraný Indians of the wilderness, between the Paraná and the Paraguay. Looking back across the misty gulf of two hundred years, to the happy life of the prosperous Mission towns, which now lie swallowed up in the green sea of this fiercely hungry vegetation, one wonders what the Republic of Paraguay might have been to-day if the work of Alvar Nunez, Ruiz Montoza and their devoted brethren had been permitted to endure, if the wise priests had not been driven forth and their flocks despoiled and dispersed, by the political and commercial exponents of our restless civilisation? A pitiful tale this, of splendid ideals and efforts brought to naught, which one may still read in scattered vestiges of cultivation, in the creeper-covered belfries of ruined churches, from Corrientes in the Argentine to Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil.

But of all this, of the hopes and fears and martyrdoms that lie deep buried in these deserted Missions, and in a few forgotten books, you will seldom hear a word spoken amongst the *estancieros*, commercial travellers and functionaries, who take their meals and play their interminable "truce" and poker in the saloon of the river-boat. For the native-born, the *hijo del pais*, once you get away from the Europeanised life of the commercial cities of the Atlantic coast (whose intellectual capital is Paris), and lose the main current of white immigration, the history of the country begins with the post-revolutionary period. It centres habitually in the sordid struggles of the military

dictators and political adventurers, who, in the sacred name of Liberty, have cultivated every noxious growth of tyrannical bureaucracy and shown to what straits an undisciplined people may be brought by the despotism of a false democracy. The farther you penetrate into the inland fastnesses of the South American continent, the more sonorous become the periods of the politicians who proclaim the inalienable rights of man and the doctrines of liberty, equality and fraternity; the more conspicuous also the parlous condition of the States which have hearkened unto them. Several causes have combined to make Paraguay the happy hunting-ground of the demagogue, and a most remarkable example of democracy *pour rire—et pour pleurer*. In the first place, its geographical and climatic conditions have naturally tended to foster the cheerful self-sufficiency which accepted the military dictatorship of Francia and followed the tyrant Lopez in his heroic, suicidal wars of aggression. But we must go down deeper, back to the days of the Spanish conquest, to find there in social causes a convincing explanation of the *mestizo* soul, as expressed in Paraguayan politics, and of the gradual shrinkage of one of the noblest provinces of Colonial Spain to its present narrow boundaries.

The state of society in Paraguay, at the time of the Spanish conquest, was rendered essentially different from that of Chile or Mexico by reason of the simple fact that the followers of Mendoza and Irala brought practically no Spanish women with them, and therefore intermarried freely with the Guaraný Indians. From the offspring and descendants of these marriages arose the ruling class. In the absence of new white immigration, they came in course of time to regard themselves as Spaniards, whereas, in the other provinces, the offspring of mixed marriages

remained practically Indians. Moreover, the devastating wars waged by Lopez killed off (together with nine-tenths of the able-bodied male population) the little remnant that then remained in the country of pure-bred Spanish stock. Since that time the decimated country, preserving its independence solely because of the mutual jealousies of Argentina and Brazil, has been the undisputed stamping-ground of predatory demagogues, windy Jacobin preachers of the false doctrine of social rights without civic duties, who have made the spirit of revolution endemic. All the racial qualities and defects of the aboriginal Guaraný stock have tended to dispose the *mestizo* product to accept with alacrity the political heresy which makes every man a despoiler, and never a supporter, of the public purse. Idleness, inbred by centuries of ease in a highly fertile land, comes naturally to this people; by the authority of imported modern Socialism, it has been raised to a fine art, so that no self-respecting man works if he can help it, and all look upon the State as the milch cow miraculous, the universal provider. Therefore, and also because no people can live for ever by taking in each other's washing, the Paraguayan dollar (still proudly described by the native as the *peso fuerte*, to distinguish it from the rival debased currency of Bolivia) is worth three or four cents to-day in the world's markets.

But to leave the barren field of politics and return awhile to the humanities aboard our river-boat. One of the things that chiefly impresses the European traveller —unless already familiar with the social code and the relations of the sexes in South America—is the way in which the men and women are kept severely apart. Aboard the *Berna* there were several families, occupying side tables, whilst the Captain's central table was occupied solely by men. The Rabelaisian character of the

conversation at that table, conducted by *caballeros,* priests and cow-punchers alike, afforded in itself a sufficient explanation (Moorish traditions apart) of many things that might otherwise puzzle the uninitiated. At every *baile* (dance) you will see the same thing; the women were virtuously clustered together on one side of the room, and the men on the other. You will find it strictly observed in the travelling booths of the humblest marionette show, playing to the peons and their families on some lonely *estancia* in the wilds; and even in the comparatively sophisticated drawing-rooms of Montevideo and Buenos Aires, the same social code is generally imposed, with similar precautions.

The position of the Captain aboard these river-boats is chiefly social and ornamental; he has little or nothing to do with navigation. This is entrusted to the capable hands of *praticos* or quartermaster-pilots, supported by a numerous crew of leisurely and loquacious citizens. The ship carries a postal clerk and two pursers, one for passengers and one for cargo; all three officials have smart uniforms and command the services of assistant autocrats; their duties (between meals and siestas) consist largely in the discussion of politics and the playing of cards with the Captain and his guests, with occasional excursions down the primrose path of flirtatious dalliance. Such posts are naturally greatly coveted by the relatives or protégés of Argentine statesmen, with the result that Government interference in the business of navigation on the Paraná has sometimes reached a point at which shipowners have seen fit to transfer their vessels to the slightly less bureaucratic administration of Uruguay.

But the *praticos* know their work, and their navigation on the whole is singularly free from accidents and delays, considering the erratic behaviour and dangerous

shoals of the river. Only once on this trip, just after leaving Corrientes, did the *Berna* run aground on a sandbank, thereby damaging her rudder. We lay there, effecting repairs, most of the night, but neither Captain, crew nor passengers appeared in the least disturbed by the prospect of the addition of twelve hours, more or less, to the journey. *Mas ó menos* and *mañana*, in these latitudes, run each other very close for first place as the expression of the philosophy of the race. Here, as in the wise old East, men have discovered that time is *not* money unless, for our sins, we choose to make it so.

Time was certainly not money with the officers and passengers of the S.S. *Berna*, a cheery, light-hearted polyglot lot, whose life on board consisted of meals, sleep, conversation well spiced with wine, women and song, and card-playing, which went on from siesta time till the small hours of the morning. The poker players included the Captain, purser, and postal clerk, a Greek Argentine, a doctor returning to his home in Corrientes, two *estanciero* brothers of Scotch descent, a dentist, a journalist bound for Paraná, a North-American German, a Frenchman in the *yerba* trade, and an Italian belonging to the orange-growing company at Villeta. I had witnessed at Buenos Aires the conjugal embraces and admonitions, the demonstrative farewells, the taking of valedictory snapshots, with which the wives, mothers and sisters of these intrepid travellers had sent them forth upon the great adventure of this river journey, and I knew that under most of their Tartarin waistcoats there lurked a genuinely domesticated, if somewhat wayward, soul. I had seen the Corrientes doctor come aboard, singing purple songs of Araby, so to speak, and his chartered libertine pose was hardly to be reconciled with the Benedick care he lavished on his

baggage, consisting chiefly of three bowls of goldfish and a cageful of canaries.

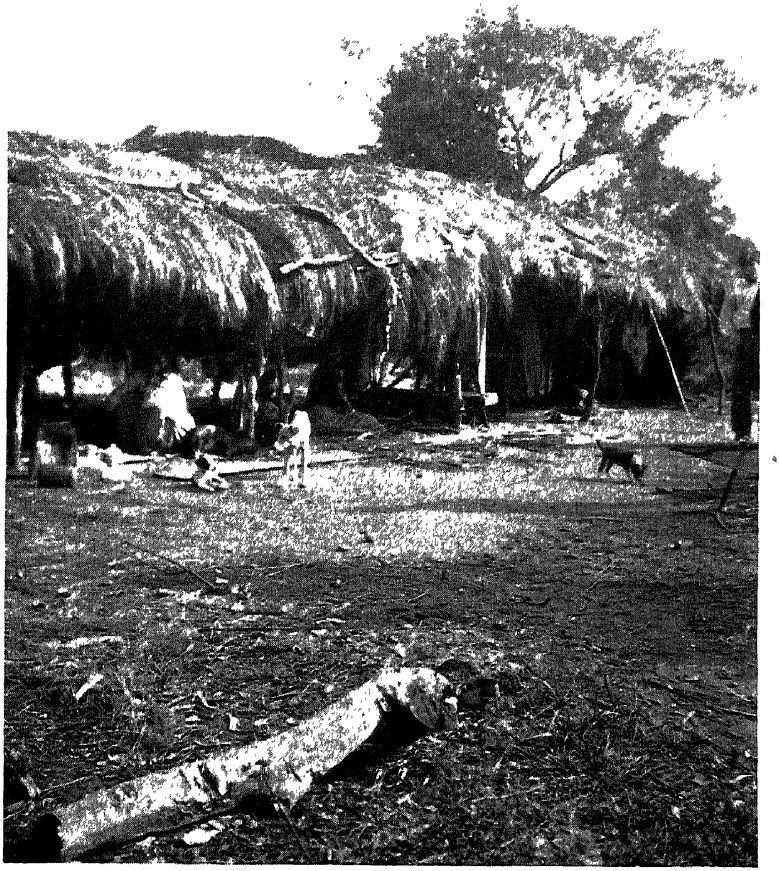
For a *gringo* travelling in search of knowledge, there was much to be learned from these men, for all their light-hearted insouciance; and they made the learning very easy and pleasant. Whatever undesirable types of humanity there may be in South America, there are no snobs; the social taboos and fictitious class barriers in which our Upper Tootings delight, are unthinkable here. These people take (or leave) you on your merits, as a human being, not on those of your ancestors or your bank account; every peon will give, and claim, the same courtesy as his *padron*. After a brief acquaintance, if you are sociably inclined, they will call you by your Christian name; as Don Juan or Don Carlos, henceforth and for ever, you will be known to them and to their little world. Except for ultra-serious purposes of business, surnames are superfluous in these regions; in the case of an Englishman, at all events, the son of the soil prefers to ignore them, for names like Thistlebottom and Macgillycuddy are beyond his linguistic capacity, and involve an absurd waste of mental effort. If you are a stranger and friendly disposed, he will call you Señor, or, as a concession to your nationality, plain "Mister"; later, in moments of expansion, he will use the more intimate "ché," that curious Pampas-born term of affection, universally used amongst friends and familiars in these parts. It is not Spanish, this "ché" (though you will hear it used by seafaring men at Valencia and Barcelona), but seems to have been borrowed from the Guaraný, in which language it means "mine." Anyway, Spanish South America could not get on without it. To be addressed as "ché" means that you have been promoted to the brotherhood of the elect.

Amongst this polyglot gathering on the *Berna*, and at the cafés of our various ports of call, one could not fail to notice how sensibly the Spanish language is being modified by the frequent admixture of Italian and Portuguese idioms; it looks, indeed, as if in many places the result would be a new *lingua franca*. The influence of the Italian tongue is particularly noticeable. In certain districts of the Chaco, for instance, settlers from the Piedmont are more numerous than those of other nationalities; these men seem to forget their mother tongue very readily, but conspicuous traces of it survive in the vocabularies of the entire district. At Villeta, between Formosa and Asunçion, where a large Italian-Guaraný community is prosperously engaged in the orange business, natives and emigrants alike speak an *olla podrida* tongue, very musical, but perplexing to the uninitiated. A very beautiful sight, by the way, is the wharf at Villeta, where the graceful, gentle-featured women unload the golden fruit from great oxen-drawn carts and pack it swiftly into bags, which the men carry aboard. Looking at the kindly intelligent faces of these descendants of the Guaranýs, one can understand why the Jesuits made of them such good Christians. I have no means of knowing what the nature or state of their souls may be, but physically they are certainly far more attractive, more *simpatico*, as they themselves would say, than a wharf-side crowd in London or Liverpool, New York or Nagasaki.

At Corrientes, where the *Berna* reposed leisurely for the better part of a beautiful day of sunshine and cool breezes, there is a big trade in oranges. As many as forty wagon-loads a day go hence, by the railway to Concordia, to Buenos Aires. A queer old place, this Corrientes, with its streets dimly lighted by kerosene lamps, the grass growing luxuriantly between the rails

of a decrepit tram line, dogs drowsing in the sun, and the inhabitants all apparently busy at midday with the local paper, a sheet about the size of a page of *John Bull*. It has the reputation, however, of being an enterprising and prosperous town, in spite of its generally mouldy appearance, its shocking bad roads, its lack of drains and other public works. The provincial elections were in full swing the day we were there, and a prominent citizen who did the honours—one of the poker party—assured us that the destinies of the Republic depended on the result. Beyond a certain liveliness at the Café de Buenos Aires, there was, however, nothing to indicate that Corrientes was aware of the fact, or that any of its inhabitants had sufficient faith in politicians to hope that either the Ins or the Outs would ever make a decent road to the race-course and the "Jardin Madrid." There is something very strange in the slumbrous, well-satisfied repose of these "camp" towns of the Argentine and Uruguay, when one reflects that, for nine months in the year, the climate is temperate, and that immigration is continually bringing them infusions of new blood. No doubt it is only on the surface, like the apparent inactivity of little prairie towns in the States or the great wheat plains of Canada; for, after all, a place like Corrientes is the gathering place and market for the ever-increasing produce of a vast tract of country.

The manager of the Café de Buenos Aires—a very up-to-date hotel—was (I know not what he is to-day) a very rabid pro-German, who made no secret of his sympathies. In his office you had the satisfaction of paying your bill confronted by truculent effigies of the Kaiser, Hindenburg and Co., backed by the German flag. With this gentleman's idiosyncrasies the local politicians, being neutrals, were evidently unconcerned, but I will record it to their



CORRIENTES (ARGENTINA) SEEN FROM THE RIVER

[*To face p.* 126.

credit that when, at dinner, the manager's son told his German pianist (whose efforts were supposed to assist digestion and conversation) to play the "Wacht am Rhein," three or four of them insisted on his following it up with "God Save the King." And this he did without demur, whilst half the room stood up, with the three Britishers present, in honour of His Majesty.

Above Corrientes, the river broadens out into long shallow reaches, full of shoals and sandbanks, and navigation is as tricky as on the Peiho or the Mississippi. Very beautiful, especially at sunset, are these long stretches of river, flowing amidst the silence and shadows of the Paraguayan jungle and the untamable wilderness of the Chaco Austral. One sees an alligator, here and there, hardly distinguishable from driftwood, on the sand-flats; a few parrots, toucan and wild-fowl, but scarcely a sign of human habitation or handiwork. At Las Palmas, four hours from Corrientes, I left the *Berna* and her cheerful company, being invited by the hospitable Irishman who manages a great sugar and tannin factory in these wilds, to see something of life in the Chaco.

When you land on the mudbank at Las Palmas, and contemplate the little *puerto*, which consists of a few ramshackle buildings and a tinpot station at the end of the factory's Decauville line, you begin to understand the feelings of Martin Chuzzlewit when introduced to the delectable city of Eden. You look at the half a dozen ragged specimens of humanity who have just come across from the Paraguayan shore, ostensibly to sell oranges; your eye takes in all the visible details of the further landscape, consisting exclusively of mud, swampy jungle and a dozen miserable-looking hovels, and you ask yourself, by what inspiration of courage or superior knowledge came it that an Ulsterman from Ballymena should elect

to make a fortune in such a spot and with such materials? You know that he did achieve a fortune and that he has made the wilderness to blossom, if not precisely like a rose, at least very fruitfully; and so, like him, you go forward in faith and hope.

After six miles of the Decauville line on a bumpy motor trolley, through country waterlogged by recent thunderstorms, and interspersed with sugar-cane plantations, you emerge at the factory. The wilderness encompasses it about so closely on every hand, it seems so utterly remote from the world that lives by machinery and trade, its steam whistle strikes so fanciful a note amidst these wastes, as fallow now as they were by the sources of time, that, in spite of the huge stacks of *quebracho* and the fussy activity of the tinpot railway, you never quite get over the first impression of incongruous unreality, of an Aladdin-lamp or magic-carpet illusion. This impression grows, in fact, when they show the palatial mansion that Hardy of Ballymena conjured for himself out of the swamp, his wonderful house of tessellated floors, marble baths and stained-glass windows. It is empty and silent now for eleven months out of the twelve, because Hardy has been gathered to his fathers, and all this goodly messuage serves only as the monument of one who made his dreams come true, and as a gathering spot for the seven Directors of the Company which now reigns in his stead. These come from Buenos Aires once a year to inspect the property and to hold revel—a Directorial joy-ride, so to speak—in the place that once was his. I do not know what a Director's reflections are on these occasions, but for myself, walking in the cool of his deep-shaded pleasance, I offered up thanksgiving and praise for Hardy; for by such men has the Raj been builded, and when their breed dies out the Raj dies with them. He was one of those hard-

bitten, tenacious men that Antrim rears, with all the dogged obstinacy of the Scotch and the intelligence of the Irish, whom you find struggling and prospering throughout the seven seas. His father kept a small draper's shop in Ballymena, but it could not hold the wanderer and his dreams. After a spell in Australia, he came to Buenos Aires, where he started a small dry goods store, made money selling Belfast linen, and married a native lady. Then he became an *estanciero*, and in the end sold his shop and fenced lands to stake his whole fortune on the development of the sugar and tannin business in the wild Chaco. It took a brave man to create this oasis of industry in the heart of the jungle, but he did it and the results have justified his courage.

The admixture of breeds amongst the workers in the factory is extraordinary, and probably unequalled even in Chicago. The bulk of the labourers are native Indians, but the " Colonists," as those of European parentage are called, include Italians, Poles, Germans, Greeks, Spaniards, Montenegrins, Paraguayans, Australians, Frenchmen and even Finns. Some of the Australians have an interesting past, being the remnants of that ill-fated colony of communists which came from Australia to take up free grants of land and to create Utopia in Paraguay in 1893, which hopeful scheme eventually failed because the honest hard-working members of the community grew weary of toiling for the benefit of their loafer brethren. Three or four of the Frenchmen came from Brittany, and had brought their families with them. Why any Finns should ever have elected to cast their lot in the hottest part of the Argentine is something of a mystery, but no doubt they, like other colonists, are attracted hither in the first instance by the fact that the terms of the Company's charter compel it to sell or lease land to settlers at very low rates. When

they have once seen the land, they generally prefer the factory. It is the Italians who generally take most kindly to the cultivation of this rich but rough-hewn country; many of them rent land from the Company, at a *peso* per hectario, and make small fortunes out of sugar and cattle.

All these colonists are keen, staunch Argentinos. Knight, in *The Cruise of the Falcon*, refers to the strange fascination of these lotus-eating lands for the wandering mariner, a lure that calls and keeps them to the end. It is the call of the wild, no doubt, added to the attractions of a land where food is easily come by, and woman well-favoured, soft-hearted and hard-working. What more, indeed, could a man ask? Be this as it may, there is no doubt that, with the exception of a few Germans who cling steadfastly to memories of their Vaterland, all this flotsam and jetsam from the shores of Europe is being rapidly and consciously amalgamated into a new and sturdy generation of Argentinos. The sons of an Englishman, born here of a native woman, will grow up without knowledge of the English tongue and no desire to learn it. In the colonists' school attached to the factory (there is a separate one for Indians) the cult of the flag is a very sincere and serious ceremony, in which the children take intense pride.

The intermarriage of colonists with native Indian women produces a very creditable type of human being, but from the social point of view it presents certain undeniable drawbacks. Even in society as it exists around and about the factory, these drawbacks are manifest; in fact, the more isolated the community, the more conspicuous their results. As a good many colonists marry native ladies of humble rank, before attaining to the dignity of a house with a tiled roof and a salary,

and as some of these ladies' relatives remain in the humble category of peons' wives and daughters, it is evidently difficult, very difficult, to draw a satisfactory line of distinction between Indian and white blood, or between wages and salaries. Yet here, as in all Spanish-American communities, social etiquette, nice distinctions, and a severe code of decorum are supremely important. Thus the giving of a *baile* becomes a very serious, formal affair, involving as many delicate problems as a diplomatic function in Vienna. To draw the line at servants is not easy, for, after all, a sister is a sister, even though she be a peon's wife. Hence many heart-burnings on the border line of society, and little serpents of bitterness in the garden of good-fellowship.

Assisting at the opening of one of these entertainments, as solemnly punctilious as a State ball, with the men all stiffly seated on one side of the room and the women on the other, I found much food for meditation as to the strange causes and results of the peculiar relations between the sexes which obtains throughout Latin America. Looking at these primly decorous males, all apparently willing conformists to a conventional code of manners and morals, and knowing something of their natural state of body and mind, the explanation would seem to be that for these latest heirs of the Conquistadores there are two voices, both compelling yet conflicting, which call them. One, the voice of old Spain, which learned from the Moors the philosophy and social code of the East—this is the voice which inspires his attitude towards women, his dislike of manual labour, his panachéd pride. The other is the voice of the New World, of that ardent spirit of democracy which threw off the yoke of Spain; it is this which inspires his flamboyant idealism, his turbulent and revolutionary restlessness. And between these two voices,

he often seems to stand a little bewildered, ineffective, uncertain of his ground.

The native Indians are, as a rule, a hard-working and peaceable race, as they were in the days of the old Jesuit missions, but incurably thriftless and, from the domestic point of view, primitive; more or less promiscuous in their affections, unsophisticated mortals, addicted, under the influence of love and caña, to swift moods of passion. Their wages at the factory are from $1.50 to $2 a day, but very few of them ever save any money. Pay day, for the men, means a good deal of drinking and quarrelling, and, for the women, lavish purchases at the factory store. The huts and houses in which they live, some close to the factory, others in little clearings amidst the swamps and woods through which runs the Decauville line, are incredibly dirty and untidy, so much so that one wonders how the women who inhabit these hovels manage to turn themselves out as decently as they do. In some of the *pueblos* far up the line, where the *quebracho* workers live, their huts are such flimsy things that rain and wind go right through them, and all the family's domestic economy is exposed to the gaze of the passer-by—a paper-covered trunk, in which its possessions are locked up, mosquito-curtained camp-beds, and the wash hanging up to dry. Their working hours are from dawn to dusk, either labouring at the haulage of heavy *quebracho* logs or in the malarial mud where the sugar-cane grows. As these simple folk are being educated and can already read the newspapers, no doubt but that in time they will learn to strike for a pound a day and six hours' work—why not? especially as war has sent up the price of *quebracho* tannin from $60 to $240 a ton, and brought no little wealth to the shareholders in Buenos Aires, who pay no excess profits. But it will be some time before the Indian attains to the

wisdom of Snowden, Smillie and Co., and meanwhile, judging by his cheerful demeanour, he seems by no means discontented with the world of things as they are.

Under the auspices of the Argentine Government, which takes an intelligent interest in matters of public health and education even in these remote wilds, the factory at Las Palmas provides its workers, colonists and natives, with a good hospital, schools, benefit of clergy, and occasional recreation in the form of dances and cinema shows. A doctor is provided by the Company; there is plenty of practice for him, as both bubonic plague and leprosy occur in this district, not to mention snake-bites, malaria and a good deal of pulmonary sickness; but at the time of my visit, the last incumbent had just left, finding the place either too dull for him, or too hot. Opinions differed on this point; at any rate, he must have been a bit of a blade and no stickler for hygiene, for he left his quarters in a shocking state and had beguiled his leisure by using the bath and water-jug as targets for revolver practice. Nobody in the hospital seemed to mind his going; the *padron's* good Irish wife gave the patients all the care they wanted.

Except in surgical cases, the native has not much use for a doctor; he prefers his own old-wife remedies, most of which are compounded on the venerable principle that great virtue lies in all things outlandish and fantastic. They cup and bleed, of course, as earnestly as our own forefathers did in the good old days. For a burn or wound, they rub in the ashes of an old hat. To relieve internal pains, the fat off a duck's back is applied in the form of a small plaster over each eye, and where ducks are not procurable, the fat of an alligator will serve. Certain of these native nostrums are popular, not only in these farther pampas and savannahs, but throughout all the

towns and " camp " of Argentine and Uruguay. There is, for instance, one widely prevalent cure for quinsy; you must get a Paraguayan dog and spit thrice down his throat. The same unfortunate animal is reputed to cure rheumatism by the simple contact of the patient's feet against his back. In the matter of domestic animals' ailments, the country is alive with sovereign specifics, many of which are interesting as folk-lore. To cure a horse or cow of maggots, you walk the beast across the corral so as to form the sign of the cross; then, having got a clear impression of his footprints, you cut out the soil and replace it backwards. This is never known to fail. For a horse suffering from stricture, you kill a dog and hang its head on to the patient's neck; if you haven't got a dead dog, the string from a lady's petticoat will do.

In 1916 the factory school for colonists' children boasted 240 pupils and three mistresses (two sisters and a niece), who drew good salaries from the Government. The system of education, including instruction in the duties of citizenship and discipline, seems to be excellent, both in methods and results; this makes it all the more regrettable that the authorities have so far done nothing to regulate and improve the type of Cinema entertainment provided for these highly impressionable people. The Cinema is the chief amusement of these workers on Sundays and holidays, but the films, which come to them by way of Corrientes, are almost all either of the sentimental-slushy or the " mysteries of New York " type, the kind of thing with which the movie-makers of the States have vitiated the taste and falsified the imagination of five continents. Even these untutored peons have been known to declare themselves sick and weary of the drawing-room pruriency of these so-called love dreams, with their everlasting angel-child and their Bowery style of humour, and to resent

the obscenity of other films which are specially produced, it seems, for Argentine consumption. But if this be so, one asks oneself why a government which takes so keen and praiseworthy an interest in education should neglect the obvious opportunities which lie ready to their hand in using the Cinema for purposes of rational recreation and instruction? The way the United States Government have lately been using it for purposes of political propaganda in South America, affords an object lesson that any Minister of Education should be able to appreciate.

The business of the Church amongst these colonists seems chiefly confined to christenings, marriages and burials; attendance at Sunday Mass is desultory and confers little or no social distinction. The padre's appearance and deportment were not those of the Church militant; they suggested rather cheerful acquiescence in the lot of the lotus-eater, slightly handicapped by the routine of professional duties. These also he took lightly: on the occasion of my one attendance at Mass (there was a total congregation of three) his reverence scamped the service with a casual jauntiness that brought to mind the ministrations of the uxorious priests of little Russian villages. Of course familiarity breeds contempt, but *désinvolture* may be overdone, and when he stopped suddenly in the middle of the Credo to spit, with great force and accuracy, at the wall behind the altar, I decided to conclude my devotions in the open air. For the benefit of such Protestants as are to be found among the colonists, there are occasional visitations by the English bishop, whose services—in full canonicals—are requisitioned for baptisms *en bloc*.

The Chaco is not a province of Argentine, but "national territory." It is therefore possessed of a Governor—that is to say, its affairs are generally controlled by one who

has achieved distinction in the pursuit of politics. Judging by the conversation of politicians and officials, the chief business of the authorities hereabouts consists in collecting revenue, preserving order *tant bien que mal*, and checking the exuberant activities of smugglers from across the river Paraguay. Every now and then, His Excellence makes a progress through the territory, to visit the sources of revenue production, including the factory at Las Palmas. He travels in state, with a considerable following of retainers, cheerfully pleasant people to meet, but generally so dirty and untidy in their habits that, on their passing, nothing less than a vacuum cleaner can restore the situation. As permanent representative of the majesty of the law, the State maintains a Comisario of Police at the factory, in command of fourteen sword-bearing siesta experts. The Company is not supposed to pay the police, but in the Chaco, as in other parts of the Argentine and in Uruguay, experience tends to confirm the belief that cattle-lifting, larceny, removal of landmarks and other forms of crime are more prevalent in districts where the Comisario receives no douceur from the landowner or *emprensa*, than in those which provide inducements for the display of his professional activities. The Comisario is a very important personage in " camp " life—often a picturesque and gallant fellow, sometimes a sorry, scurvy rogue—and the character of the man generally reflects, *in parvo*, the tendencies and moral of the government actually in power. Here, in the Chaco, any officer who chooses to turn a blind eye to the boat traffic from the Paraguayan bank of the river can amass a modest competence without undue exertion. Even with the best of intentions, it must be extremely difficult to devise any effective check to the operations of the Paraguayan *bolicheras* whose runners, in the guise of simple fisher-

folk and orange-sellers, do a steady business in caña and the black cigars which the women smoke. A good deal of the smuggling is done by women, relying upon the sex taboo to protect them from the hands of strange men: they carry caña in sausage skins, artfully coiled in coigns of vantage about their persons. For such cases, suspicion being justified by the size or shape of the alleged orange vendor, an ingenious protector of the revenue once devised the simple though risky expedient of deftly pricking the protuberance with a bare bodkin, whereupon, so to speak, the lady's spirit forsook her. But in these sparsely inhabited regions of immense distances, the smuggler's opportunities are poor at best, and the cost of the preventive service must be far greater than the utmost figure of the revenue it can save; so that, apart from the pleasurable excitement which it affords, the whole business, economically speaking, is foolish and futile. On the morning that I left Las Palmas for Asunçion, after a night of howling *tormento* and torrential rain, I saw in the damp and dismal dawn, a pitiful group of five of these contrabandists, making their maté over a spluttering fire by the edge of a little wood, where they had probably slept. Two of them were women, by no means ill-favoured but wretchedly clad and shivering (the temperature had fallen in a few hours from 95 to 78 degrees, with the south wind), and I wondered, as I watched them preparing their scanty meal, what possible compensation can existence offer for all its vexations to poor devils like these? Their boat, a ramshackle thing, lay moored close by, and, as a guarantee of good faith, no doubt, they had spread a few hundred oranges—three or four shillings' worth—to dry upon the bank. One of them, a mere lad, was listlessly casting a long single-hook line into the stream, more from force of habit, it seemed, than in the hope of catching

anything but a cold. The trade of the gallant *bandillero* seemed a poor business.

Though wild and often desolate in its swampier parts the Chaco region is very beautiful, with an insidious beauty that grips and holds you. There is magic in the loneliness, the untamed virginity of the silent places. Even in the clearings of man's handiwork, Nature commands respect; you feel that his intrusion is a piece of presumption. Let him but cease to toil for a brief season and all his landmarks are swiftly submerged. The water-logged condition of the country, unpleasantly conspicuous in the rainy season, is due to the presence of a thick layer of hard clay just below the surface; the least heavy rain means more water on the surface than the rivers can readily carry off. Mother Earth hereabouts consists, in fact, of non-porous clay, with a top dressing of vegetable matter; you will not see a stone in a day's march. It is an ideal breeding-ground for mosquitoes; nowhere on earth, not even in Siberia, does this malignant little beast attain to such fierce energy, size and voracity. In the higher and drier patches of country, where the cattle are bred (large herds, used almost exclusively for home consumption), the grass grows so thick and high that the biggest pointer dog gets lost in it. There is fair shooting to be had on these *pasto* lands—the smaller partridge of the country and the martinetta (*Rhynchotus rufescus*), about the size of a hen pheasant. This latter bird, being hopelessly stupid and good to eat, is bound to disappear completely from the cultivated districts (as most of the Italian labourers have a gun for pot hunting purposes), just as it has disappeared elsewhere. The best way to shoot them in the Chaco is from the back of a well-broken horse, with mounted peons on either side to serve as beaters. The birds are easily flushed and as a rule do not

fly far, but it is not easy to find and get them up a second time. Nor is it easy to hold your reins in one hand and a gun in the other when mosquitoes, with a proboscis like a small needle, are making holes in your face and drawing blood all the time.

The variety of bird life is astonishing, reminding one of the descriptions which old *rancheros* give of the wild birds that used to make the lagoons melodious and beautiful in Uruguay, before the damnable devices of the feather hunters slew them to make a shopgirl's holiday. Even here in the Chaco the milliners' murderers and their agents are not unknown, but, heaven be praised! there are still impenetrable fastnesses, at the heart of the great rivers and lakes, where egrets, flamingoes and herons may live undisturbed and dance in the sun. Nearer to the haunts of men the toucan may be seen in top-heavy flight; in a day's walk I saw three beautiful kinds of shrike, including the ubiquitous bien-te-veo, kingfishers, humming-birds, parrots, oven-birds, hawks, eagles and caranchos (*Polyborus Tharus*), in great numbers. Song birds are many and tuneful; to hear the choir invisible that comes from a gathering of warblers in some *tala* thicket, or close-leafed flowering tree, is a joy for ever. The complaining note of the restless teru-teru (lapwing), though somewhat less strident here than farther south, becomes a weariness to the flesh, because of its unceasing reiteration. This *enfant gâté* among birds, protected by colonists and natives alike because of a superstition which defies time and civilisation, has waxed exceedingly bold in South America by reason of his immunity from the risks that beset other edible fowl; if it were not for the fortunate fact that plovers' eggs are as popular with peons as they are with plutocrats, their numbers would long since have darkened the heavens. As it is, giving

him all the benefit of his reputation as a watch-dog, I find the teru-teru something of a nuisance, and his peevish cry an irritant, as I take my walks abroad and he darts screaming within a few feet of my head.

From Las Palmas, past the mouth of the river Bermejo, that flows through vast wildernesses unexplored, past Formosa, capital of the "territory," through endless shoals and sandbanks, the river-boat will bring you in a day to Asunçion, chief city of the Republic of Paraguay.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DELECTABLE CITY OF ASUNÇION

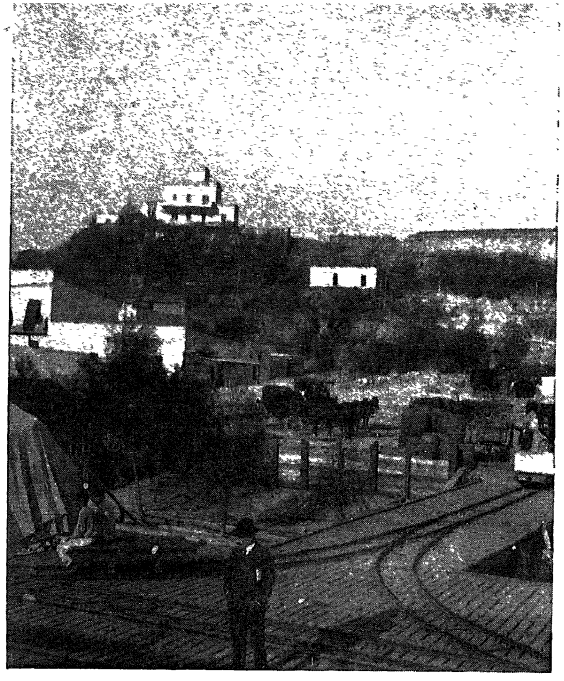
A FEW days in Asunçion will serve as an excellent corrective to the feverish delusions of the West, if indeed any of them should have clung to us thus far. Unless one is a buyer or a seller, or (worse still) a debt collector, body and soul become quickly attuned to the languidly contemplative atmosphere of the place. Life is short, you say? Alas, Señor, how true! But why make it also uncomfortable? So few things are worth the trouble of haste; love and war, perhaps, but certainly neither business, nor religion, nor the pomps and vanities of polite society. Here, in Asunçion, as far as the male population is concerned, it is nearly always afternoon, and the discussion of politics is ever their chief occupation. Here, as in Lisbon, Constantinople or Peking, and for precisely similar reasons, every enfranchised citizen is first and foremost the henchman of one or other of the ever-warring political factions; leaders and led conspiring together to prey upon productive industry of every kind. The bureaucrat is all in all, revelling amidst the chaos of national bankruptcy, in the make-believe world of his own bombastic rhetoric, thumping his empty tub, and loudly proclaiming the ultimate triumph of that creed which, on our own side of the world, offers to every citizen " ninepence for fourpence " in return for his vote.

Between 1881 and 1909 Asunçion has achieved and enjoyed six separate revolutions, each of which was eloquently proclaimed at its birth as an epoch-making crisis

in the history of civilisation. Truly, as a sober Spanish chronicler declared long ago, "the people of Asunçion only cease from political strife when a breathing space becomes absolutely necessary." Mr. Cunninghame Grahame puts it even more forcibly when he says: "Even the over-praised citizens of Athens, at the time of Pericles, were not more instant in the Agora, than the noisy mob of half-bred patriots, who in the sandy streets of Asunçion were ever agitating, always assembling, and doing everything within their power to show to the world the perfect picture of a democratic State." Alas for the Jesuits and their splendid dream of an Arcadia governed by benevolent wisdom for the peaceful welfare of the commonwealth!

As the ship comes slowly to her moorings at the Asunçion Customs Wharf, all the sights and sounds of the harbour and its approaches combine to produce the impression of time hanging gracefully on listless hands. Over yonder, across the river, stands the unconquered wilderness of the Chaco, a perpetual reminder of the futility of struggling against destiny. On this side, many of the buildings that straggle down the foothills to the water-side bear witness to the relentless ravages of tropical vegetation. Here a mill is gradually crumbling to picturesque decay, forlornly patched and propped; there in a deserted clearing, a few orange trees stand like derelicts above the tangled undergrowth. The Customs Wharf itself is far gone in dilapidation, one of its main beams swinging limply 'twixt wind and water. In the harbour, old hulks, tugs and strange obsolete craft lie intermingled with the able-bodied ships in various stages of raggedness.

The navy of the Republic, consisting chiefly of an ancient collier, converted to purposes of war by means of a conning-tower and sundry guns, lies over against the dilapidated House of Congress. There being no revolution in progress



THE WHARF AT ASUNÇION, PARAGUAY

NATIVE INDIAN DWELLINGS, PARAGUAY

[*To face p.* 142.

at the moment, her customary business of bombarding, or preparing to bombard, the city's public buildings is happily in abeyance; one of her boat's crews, gaily apparelled, is conveying a party of ladies to the shore. In the shallows beneath the barracks a troop of cavalry horses are being bathed; their riders greet the rowers of the ladies' boat with ribaldries of a raciness at which Sancho Panza would have blushed.

The wharf is thronged; apparently all the friends of all the passengers and crew are there, every lace vendor and fruit pedlar in the town, every idle citizen in search of diversion or down-river news, not to mention the usual noisy crowd of *chanqadores* and cab-drivers, intent on their legitimate business of transport. These begin bargaining with the passengers at long range; the tumult and the shouting remind one of a landing at Port Said or Canton. The stranger, marked down as rich and easy prey, becomes the suffering centre of a cyclonic turmoil of words. The *chanqador* class prides itself professionally on its eloquence, diverted in these its rare moments of labour from the serious business of politics. Was not the Señor Presidente of the Republic a Customs runner in his youth? The man who carries your trunk from the wharf to the picturesque ruin of a cab, and consigns you to the hotel of his selection, may very possibly confront you next year as a dignitary of the State.

The sturdy vociferous rogue who secured my unresisting person was known to his friends and fellow-politicians as El Gordo (Anglice, Fatty). He subsequently proved to be not only a man of weight in the community, but possessed of a fund of information, and a lively sense of humour. His manner in levying tribute was such an effective combination of the hidalgo and the highwayman, that remonstrance would have been absurd; but he atoned

for this by firmly insisting that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the only proper abiding-place for a *caballero* in Asunçion is the Hôtel St. Pierre. For this, O Gordo, may you attain to your heart's desire and become a Comisario of Police at the next revolution!

In June (which is her winter) Asunçion, city of gardens and orange groves set upon a little hill, usually welcomes the traveller with genial sunshine; but when the wind blows from the south, there is a little nipping in the air, which makes the peon to shiver in his cotton shirt and the market women to tuck their *mantas* more closely about them. There is an elusive, elemental charm about the place, which grows upon you irresistibly, despite all prejudices and premonitions; a subtle influence, born of the visions of old Moorish Spain, that greet you fleetingly at every street corner, struggling against the flamboyant democracy of ultra modernity on the one hand, and the tutelary spirits of a primordial race on the other. Even in the picturesque ruins that mark the tracks of recent revolutions, in the perverse poverty of these dwellers in a land which Nature meant to flow with milk and honey, there is something that instinctively evokes the philosophic contemplative mood.

Green grows the grass in the streets of Asunçion, even unto the ballast of the tram lines. Their pavement is of unhewn stones, loosely embedded in the loess mud, so that in wet weather the mules go stolidly splashing through ruts and holes, where the pea-soup water will lie for days. The city boasts neither drainage system nor waterworks. If you would study its main artery of commerce and methods of business, go down to the Calle Montevideo, hard by the Custom House, where at the water front ships and lighters discharge their cargoes into loud-creaking carts that look as if they had seen

service under De Solis. A narrow way this, cut by the heavy traffic to a chaos of deep ruts and mounds, where the mules (six or seven to a cart) flounder and strain at the traces and their drivers call heaven and hell to witness their affliction, in seas of mud or clouds of dust, as the sorry case may be. In the absence of pontoons, the carts must perforce go far out into the river, where the water comes up to the mules' shoulders. Even thus, no doubt, they handled the city's commerce two hundred years ago.

Go next to the House of Congress, where a battered shield, inscribed with the Republic's motto, "Paz y Justicia," looks down on mildewed walls all bespattered by revolutionary shot and shell. The building stands open to the winds of heaven; inside, the bureaucracy is represented by a couple of weary warders and a slouchy youth, guardian of a mouldy collection of blue-books, which calls itself the Biblioteca Nacional. A door has been removed bodily from one of the side entrances, revealing a winding stairway within, which leads to the upper floor, where, on occasions, the Conscript Fathers forgather. At its foot, an emaciated dog lies sleeping on a tattered fragment of matting. Over the way, across the Plaza, stands the Theatre, also partially destroyed by gun-fire in the sacred cause of Paz y Justicia. The square is nearly deserted this afternoon, because of the cold wind; but the town band, evidently trained by German methods, is discoursing Puccini for the benefit of a few children at play amongst the ragged flower-beds. A cavalry officer, in war-paint imported from the Father-land, stands killing time at the entrance to the barracks. In a little while he will go, clanking his spurs, up Florida Street to the Club, where the élite forgather to talk politics after the siesta.

At the end of the Plaza, near to the Cathedral, there stands a monument, of the curiously ineffective kind that one finds occasionally in the Plazas Independencia and Avenidas de Mayo from Panama to Paraguay, with a nondescript angel on top and electric lights festooned all over it. 'Tis a sermon in stone for the moralist and philosopher; for on this pillar, amidst the record of the proudest dates in the career of " Paz y Justicia," you will find the recent marks of rifle fire and light artillery. The city, it tells you, was founded in 1536; it heard the first small voice (*grito*) of Liberty in 1811; the Constitution was proclaimed in 1870, etc., etc. But it makes no mention of the crowning achievement of Liberty, as understood by the Francia-Lopez breed of politicians. It does not tell you that in the Homeric struggle of Paraguay against Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil (1865–70) every male capable of bearing arms was driven to the slaughter; that the country went to war with a population of 1,340,000 and came out of it with 220,000, of whom only 28,746 were men. Yet this is the overpowering fact in the history of Paraguay, the results of which confront us to-day in every phase and aspect of her social, economic and political life.

The present condition of the Republic is fairly reflected in its currency, which consists entirely of greasy paper. The Paraguayan dollar (*peso fuerte*) is worth, as I have said, between three and four cents gold, as times go; the average peon labourer earns ten of these dollars (say eighteenpence) a day. The bare necessities of life, including house-rent, are fairly cheap, but everything in the way of imported or manufactured goods is extremely dear. Boots, for example, are beyond the means of the working class; so that men, women and children, every one except politicians and policemen, go barefoot. Eggs

cost fifteen dollars a dozen, a ride in a tram one dollar. Even largesse to a beggar or a bootblack must take the form of a bank-note. Every Indian market woman, in exchange for her fowls and fish and fruit, goes home with a thick wad of this paper-money, to which each day's use adds increase of ragged greasiness. The lowest note value is fifty centavos—roughly three farthings; and for the printing of these, mark you, the Government has gone to the American Bank-note Company of New York and acquired a very creditable specimen of steel engraving. It has certainly never occurred to any market-women (and probably not to the Conscript Fathers) to inquire what proportion the cost of printing bears to the face value of these scraps of paper, or to trace the connection between this sort of frenzied finance and the chronic insolvency of the Treasury. Such things are nobody's business. The little groups of gesticulating citizens that discuss politics with such eloquent fervour on the side-walks, allot their praise or blame to public men entirely by results, measured in terms of loaves and fishes. The lower the nation's credit, the more prolific the Treasury with its paper, a phenomenon by no means confined to Paraguay.

In a community where the "emerged tenth" looks frankly to the State to be maintained in dignified ease from the public funds, it were churlish to reproach the general body of citizens either for their habits of cheerful indolence and improvidence, or for their destructive methods of remonstrating with Providence and the politicians, when there are not loaves and fishes to go round. But, to give him his due, your Paraguayan, even when, wrathful against the words and works of public men, he sets out to wreck public buildings, retains the manners of a gentleman and a certain philosophic quality of urbanity. I think it is chiefly this quality of the peon

class, together with his complete lack of snobbery, which gradually compels you to a sneaking sympathy with his primordial point of view, even though he may treat his women as beasts of burden and pawn his thirsty soul for caña. As you saunter through the silent streets of the sleeping town at midday (it takes its siesta from 11 to 2.30, be the weather hot or cold), insensibly the earnestness of all our hustling, bustling civilisation, our cult of machinery and Mammon, fade to their proper insignificance, and this people is almost justified, if only because its individual soul (for what it may be worth) is still its own. In such an atmosphere it is impossible to maintain firmly protestant moods of moral superiority. Easier far, and possibly wiser, to let oneself drift unprotesting, on the placid tide of *mañana* and *mas ó menos*.

This facile descent, this process of adaptation to environment, is generally rapid, but it is rarely complete. New Yorkers never attain to it, and Frenchmen seldom. Irishmen achieve it best, especially in the life of the "camp," because there is something imperturbably human in the philosophy of the Celt, which enables him to sympathise with his primordial Paraguayan brother, and also because he himself has never wittingly yielded to the tyranny of the Time machine.

My French host of the Hôtel St. Pierre, whither El Gordo conducted me, has chosen a profession in which even the most tolerant of men must find it hard to accept the manners and customs of Paraguay. Monsieur St. Pierre has certainly not accepted them, though he came here thirty years ago. You get an inkling of his views from the fact that the front door of the hotel is kept constantly locked, and every guest provided with a latch-key—"à cause des mouches, des voleurs et des crachats," as he is careful to explain. What with the war, and the

depreciation of currency in this country, and the increasing price of commodities, no wonder if mine host and his wife long for the Normandy of their youth, and have but little good to say of a land where a bottle of good Medoc is reckoned at 112 *pesos fuertes*. In his little bureau, lavishly decorated with the "Illustration's" portraits of French Generals, "Monsieur l'Empereur" (as his local title goes) will hold forth by the hour against the bribery and corruption, the drunkenness and dishonesty and dirt of Asunçion, the incorrigible laziness and promiscuous morals of its people. Philosophy is clearly beyond the reach of a hotel-keeper in this land, unless he and his guests are willing to abolish clocks and all other devices for defeating the leisurely instincts of the Paraguayan. For a Frenchman who believes in savoury meals, cooked and eaten *à point*, the *mas ó menos* attitude towards life is bound to generate deadly wrath-matter in the system. And yet, for all his denunciations, mine host and his staff are the best of friends; evidently his dislike of Paraguayan institutions descends not from the general to the particular in the case of the *hijo del pais*, as it does in the case of the German.

Here no German need apply. At no time welcomed, they have been firmly and finally excluded from the Hôtel St. Pierre since the war. There are plenty of them in Asunçion and at Lake San Bernadino close by, but Madame's *cuisine recherché* is not for them, even as transients. If, being an Englishman, you should happen also to be corpulent and guttural and goggled (which Heaven forbid), you must prove to mine host's satisfaction that you are not of the abhorred race. Similarly, if you come as a single lady, you must satisfy him of your respectability, and in the absence of evidence,

ways of his have, no doubt, a good deal to do with the phenomenon of the locked front door. "Better an empty room than an undesirable guest," says l'Empereur. As a moral sentiment, unimpeachable, but as a maxim for hotel management, hard to carry into lucrative practice.

In the third year of the war, the German in these parts walked delicately, a very different creature from the boastful bully that strutted and gave himself all-conquering airs in the bad days before the battle of the Marne, and again, for a little while, before the battle of the Falklands. Now, from Pernambuco to Patagonia, even in places where German Kultur and the credit system have planted the *Pickelhaube* : even where local governments and Press unite to assure the Teuton of a neutrality that is nothing if not prudent, Hans and Fritz move humbly and wear a chastened mien. For, let diplomacy and high finance do what they will, the German has become painfully aware of the fact that France is the spiritual home of the Latin Republics of South America, and that, in the day of France triumphant, the sons of the Fatherland do well to keep quiet. Even in south-eastern Brazil they are bidding a long farewell to all their dreams of a new Fatherland overseas, that should stretch southwards to the River Plate. Not as rulers, but as strangers, must they continue to dwell in these lands; and as strangers for many years to come, they will have to live down the infamies that have disgraced their nation in the eyes of every self-respecting peon. Indeed, as matters stand since Germany's defeat, it looks as if the only sympathy and support that Messrs. Meyer and Schultz will get in the future, is likely to come (as it came steadily, all through the war) from their good and faithful friends in England—from Manchester and Bradford and the Union of Demo-

cratic Control, from sentimental fools in government offices and rogues of the sleek cosmopolitan breed.

Here, in Paraguay, as late as June 1916, a large proportion of the trade in Manchester and other British goods was still handled by Germans. It seems incredible that, after two years of war, British goods, carried in British ships, should have been consigned to Germans overseas; but the fact remains, and this despite the repeated warnings and protests of British Ministers and merchants on the spot. It seems incredible, I say, that having driven the German from the seas and having thus secured the means of ousting him from his snug place in the trade of South America, we should have kept that place warm for him and comforted him, in the face of all our Orders in Council and Black Lists and Board of Trade flapdoodle about "Trading with the Enemy." It is incontestable that some "unseen hand," working for the protection and maintenance of German trade interests, triumphed over all the avowed policies of Great Britain in these parts, so that even the heathen blasphemed. Shall we ever know, I wonder, whether it was an enemy hand of perfidy, or only the clumsy paw of dogged British conservatism and red tape, guided to foolishness by the persuasiveness of Israelite finance in high places?

On the road to Villa Morra, Asunçion's fashionable suburb, there are many unmistakable signs of the presence of the prosperous Hun, in the shape of pretentious villas that shriek of Hamburg and Old Heidelberg. Coloured glass balls, terra-cotta dachshunds and porcelain gnomes, all suffering more or less from the climate, stand out pathetically incongruous against the stately background of orange trees, bananas and palms. Hans brings his fantastic Lares with him to the New World, and, through good or evil report, remains faithful to them, to his

Gretchen and to his sentimental traditions. Which things may perhaps be accounted unto him for righteousness of a kind.

Lest my truthful description of the delectable city of Asunçion should cause the reader to wonder by what stratagems this Republic has continued to exist to this day as an independent State, let it be explained that, in the forests and cattle-ranches of the interior, the Paraguayans, male as well as female, are by no means incapable of productive industry. It is only when they come under the combined influence of demagogues and drink in the cities, that the idea of labour becomes utterly unworthy of a freeborn citizen. The mainstay of the country's finances is the *yerba maté* industry (Paraguayan tea), and the backbone of that industry is a Company called the "Industrial Paraguaya," now controlled from London and locally managed by a Scotchman. If it were not for the inveterate tendency of the politicians to kill every goose that shows signs of laying golden eggs, the *yerba* trade might yet become the financial salvation of the country. The "Industrial" owns 1200 leagues of land, that is to say, about a ninth part of the territory of Paraguay Oriental; its product is greatly superior to Brazilian *yerba*, and might be laid down more cheaply than coffee in the markets of Argentina and Uruguay. But the trail of the politician lies heavy on the enterprise; want of roads and light railways, corrupt administration, illicit picking by roving bands of smugglers—small wonder if, contending with all these, the Company has paid no dividends for several years. Yet the land possesses great natural resources, and if ever the day comes when capital can safely be invested in its development, the wilderness may yet be made to blossom as the rose,

At the packing warehouse in Asunçion, where the crop from the up-country *yerbales* is dried and pressed into sacks, the peons work hard enough, considering their reputation for laziness and their pitiful wage of ten dollars a day. The Company produced four and a half million kilos of *yerba* in 1915, worth roughly a shilling per kilo. At the Corrientes mill, hydraulic machinery is used for packing the leaf, but the manager at Asunçion finds that man-power (using wooden pestles) works out cheaper in the long run. I remember once meeting with certain exponents of scientific agriculture, who had come on a sort of semi-benevolent, semi-practical mission from America to China, whose plans for rice planting by machinery were knocked out in one round when they came up against the pitiful price of Chinese coolie labour. Where labour and time are alike futile, since they cannot be made to supply the human animal's irreducible wants, your only effective machine is a quick-firing gun. And of this remedy for the world's elemental ills, the present generation in Paraguay has surely had enough.

In attempting to forecast the future of a country like this, and the destiny of its people, there is little guidance to be had from studying trade returns, or comfort in the clauses of a Constitution; also (remembering the Jesuits) we cannot pin our faith to the efforts of the most Christian Missions. Here, even more than in Mexico, the immediate question that confronts us is that of the possibility of race survival, of the capacity of this ancient Guaraný stock to adapt itself, successfully and in time, to the conditions which our economic pressure is steadily forcing upon it. It is therefore the soul of the people that concerns us, the structural character of the race; does it show any signs of intelligent national consciousness, of collective capacity to emerge, through peace or war, from the category of

beasts of burden? Of course, if one could bring oneself to believe the pompous poppy-cock of professional politicians, or the sorry stuff written for European consumption by subsidised oracles, there would be no need to worry about the body and soul of the native-born: all will be for the best in the best of all possible worlds, and Utopia just round the corner. But for those of us who, with glimmerings of understanding, watch the struggle of inefficient primitive peoples against the modern forces of Mammon (as we have seen it in Turkey or in China, in Portugal, Mexico and the Central Latin Republics of South America), it is the soul of the man in the field that finally matters. After all, the fiercely "revolving" inhabitants of Asunçion are only a tenth of the people of Paraguay, and here, as in other turbulent Republics, when the politicians create strife it is the common people that fights and pays. What prospect is there, that the man in the field of Paraguay will learn when to fight, and wherefore?

Looking dispassionately ahead, there does not seem to be much chance of survival either for the Guaraný race or for the Republic of Paraguay. The *mestizo's* primitive ancestors dwelt too long in the twilight of their slumbering gods. From a planetary point of view, and remembering that the whole population of Paraguay is about the same as that of the Borough of Kensington, you may say that it does not really matter; and yet, as Ireland proves, and Poland, this question of nationality is not so much a matter of numbers as of national ideals. The sacred rights of smaller nations, emphasised in the recent Titanic struggle of the larger, are not so simple as many of our leader-writers appear to think. The abstract right appeals, no doubt, to that sentimental abstraction known as the conscience of the world, but in practice no

small nation ever remains independent unless it be geographically protected against invasion or useful as a buffer state [1] to other and stronger Powers. As far as Paraguay is concerned, it has retained its independence since 1870 simply because Brazil and the Argentine allowed it to remain a bankrupt buffer state, neither wishing to fight for it at the moment. To this fact only the Paraguayans owe the continuance of their proud privilege of sending thirteen Senators and twenty-six Deputies to the House of Paz y Justicia and of paying them each $36,000 (£300) a year for misgoverning the country.

It is difficult for the foreigner in South America to form any permanently satisfactory idea as to the opinions of *l'homme du peuple* concerning his country and himself, and in Paraguay it is particularly difficult to obtain intimate and reliable information as to the real relations that exist between governors and governed, and between employers and employed. As in Mexico, the Indian race has here developed, by process of interbreeding, many characteristics of the Spaniard, while retaining unfathomable depths of primitive childishness. If it were not for the record of fanatical patriotism displayed in the wars of Lopez, the general attributes of the peon class, as one sees it at labour in the *yerbales*, might lead one to the conclusion that national consciousness exists only in the fervid imagination of the official mind. The actual conditions under which the peon consents to exist, are suggestive rather of mediæval serfdom than of an enlightened Republican system, whilst the attitude of the

[1] Moreover, the most ardent champions of the rights of humanity, even at Washington, seem disposed to view with complacency the absorption by peaceful penetration of a passive people such as the Koreans, or (*pace* the Monroe doctrine) the gradual Japanning of Peru.

average *patron* suggests that, for him, the labourer is only a little higher than his cattle, and a good deal lower than a free and independent voter. The Indian nature persists in the peon in a strange admixture of dog-like devotion (of which the Church has ever been ready to take advantage for purposes of State) and unreasoning suspicion of things new and strange. It persists also in the temperamental lack of energy, as distinct from industry, in labour. The peon works here, as elsewhere in South America, much in the same way as Chinese coolies labour for hire: doggedly, with a stolid, even cheerful acceptance of toil as part of the inevitable destiny of man, but without the craftsman's joy in achievement and certainly without the spiritual satisfaction of "something accomplished, something done," which frequently stimulates the Anglo-Saxon to his labour of days. Upon him, as upon the sons of Ham, lies still the ancient curse of Eden, "thorns also and thistles shall the ground bring forth to thee, in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Upon this native stock the grafting of the virtues and vices of the Spaniard, followed, since the passing of Lopez, by fantastic modern supergrowths of hybrid Democracy, have produced a very complex type, in which the old copper-coloured Adam struggles fitfully with fragments of the gospel of modernity according to Liebknecht and Lloyd George.

Dean Funes, of whose work I have already made mention, describes the character of the Guaraný Indians, before the days of steam and factories and Constitutions, in a passage which remains full of interest and more than local value: "These natives," he observes, "are of a pale colour, of good figure, and well-proportioned. Both in talent and intelligence they are capable of good development. Lacking in natural faculty for invention, they

excel in imitation. Idleness appears to be natural to them, though it may be more the result of habit than of temperament; their capacity for acquiring knowledge is marked, and novelty appeals powerfully to their minds. They are eager to command, and acquit themselves honourably in any position to which they may attain. Eloquence commands the highest respect among them, and avarice has no degrading hold upon their minds. Quick to resent an insult, they would rather submit to punishment than bear an injurious word. Unchastity in their women they regard with indifference, even husbands making light of infidelity in their wives," and so on.

During the Golden Age—two centuries long—of the Jesuits' benevolent despotism in Greater Paraguay, the peaceful industry of these Indians made them probably the most contentedly-happy people on the American continent, and the Mission territories the most productive possessions of the Spanish Crown. It is necessary to bear in mind this fact, and the character of a people which lent itself so readily to an Arcadian type of religious communism, in order to appreciate the tragedy of their history since the introduction of Paz y Justicia, modern style. Even if the material benefits continually promised in the name of Democracy were, by some miracle, forthcoming, all the history of Latin America goes to prove that the Indian needs something more than loaves and fishes, some spiritual nourishment and direction. It explains also the reverence which was felt, even by the victims of his tyranny, for Francia, a Dictator who, with all his faults (like Diaz in Mexico), at least maintained order and a rough-and-ready sort of communism. The Indians mourned Francia, after his death, because, with all his faults, and what Carlyle calls his " grim unspeak-

abilities," this ruler had in him that quality which satisfied the spiritual side of their nature. Indeed, as compared with their present lot under the spasmodic garrulous rule of political adventurers, Francia's Dictatorship appears almost beneficent and certainly dignified. For this Dominican, ripe for canonisation, this "excellent superior of Jesuits," knew at least the saving grace of authoritative silence.

In considering the present characteristics of the Paraguayans and their probable destinies, a temporary factor resultant from the campaigns of Lopez must not be overlooked—namely, the numerical preponderance of women. At the close of that magnificent and perfectly futile struggle, there were five women to every man throughout the decimated Republic, and this although women had been slain by thousands. In a charming description of a festival held at the old Jesuit Reduction of Santa Maria la Mayor, when peace had been restored to the wilderness, Mr. Cunninghame Grahame touches lightly on this matter: "Bands of boys," he writes, "for in those days most of the men had been killed off in the past wars, came trooping in, accompanied by crowds of women and of girls, who carried all their belongings; for there were thirteen women to a man, and the youngest boy was at a premium amongst the Indian women, who in the villages, where hardly any men were left, fought for male stragglers like unchained tigresses." The social and economic results of this parlous dislocation of the balance of nature are just as unmistakable here in Paraguay to-day as they were, *mutatis mutandis*, in California in the days when there were five men to every woman. From the moral and social point of view, it is not good for either men or women to be at a premium, either for purposes of matrimony or bread-winning. If the Paraguay peon's treat-

ment of his women-folk is something less than cavalier; if his wives and his sisters and his cousins and his aunts are wont to play before him their humble part as beasts of burden, let us not ascribe this to him as original sin, but rather to the brutal force of imposed circumstances. No doubt but that, in process of time, nature and immigration will adjust the sex balance and the Paraguayan women will then cease to compete for the favour of their *fainéant* swains by supporting them in idleness and abetting them in the consumption of caña. As matters stand, the peon undoubtedly has things very much his own way, within the limits of his resources, in the matter of wine, women and song. Without a doubt, he gets more of all three than his grandfather did in Francia's day, and often more than is good for him. He takes the gifts of the gods with something very suggestive of hidalgo nonchalance, being (as Father Funes observed) of a keenly imitative nature. His fondness for caña is probably the worst feature of his disposition, and if common report speaks truly, it is a growing evil. In every enterprise where foreign capital is involved, and aboriginal morals supervised in the interests of dividends, strict rules are made excluding all liquor from the premises. At the factory of the "Industrial" all the windows are wired, so that *yerba* may not be passed out to the peons' ladies-in-waiting, or caña passed in. On the ground floor the lower half of the window is boarded up, for it was found that wire netting did not prevent the men from getting their liquor; their faithful wives held the caña up to the windows in a maté bowl, and their lords sucked it through the wire by means of the *bombilla*. In the sugar and *quebracho* (tannin) factories, where Indians are employed, here and in the Argentine, precautions against pilfering require constant vigilance. "*Personne n'est*

*très ladrone,*" is a Swiss manager's verdict of Paraguayan honesty, "*mais tout le monde est un peu ladrone.*"

In his relations with women the Paraguayan is primitive, passionate and promiscuous. Released from the discipline and moral restraints that made him, according to the chroniclers, a fairly decent member of society under the Jesuits' dispensation, and encouraged in his polygamous instincts by the fact that he is an object of matrimonial (or morganatic) competition, his love affairs are frequent and free. As a result, Society and the law recognise three classes of offspring—legitimate children, illegitimate and natural. The "naturals" are those born of the liaison of unmarried parents; they are often taken into the man's subsequently-acquired and legitimate family, and brought up as part of it, the mother being provided for. Illegitimate children are those born of a man's irregular connections after marriage; these by the laws of the land are entitled to claim a share of their father's estate upon his death, a condition of affairs which provides much scandalous material for the gossips and profitable work for lawyers. Philoprogenitiveness is strongly marked in both sexes, so that (as in the East) sterility in a woman is commonly regarded as justifying her husband in contracting irregular relations. For the same reason home life is seen at its best in Paraguayan families during the period when the children are young.

Nevertheless, the Spanish blood in his veins often invests the peon's love affairs with a touch of Quixotic adventure and a romantic quality, in which chivalry and insouciance are fitfully blended, as amongst the Gauchos. Fierce homicidal jealousy in his blood, and black mood of swift revenge when balked of his heart's desire; more of the tragedies that stand recorded in rude crosses by the wayside are tales of passionate intrigue and vendettas, for

life is cheap in the wilderness of the *yerbales*, and the arm of the law as short as the memories of men. Often, indeed, the law is so framed and administered, here as elsewhere, in the Latin Republics, that it serves as a direct incentive to lawlessness.

To cite a typical case in point: in 1916, at one of the *yerbales* stations of the "Industrial," a *mestizo* carpenter became enamoured of the major-domo's sister, and, following the customary etiquette, asked permission to pay court to the lady, *pour le bon motif*. The major-domo not only refused his consent, but persuaded the manager to have the man transferred to another station. The carpenter begged and protested, promising to abandon his suit, but the order was upheld—he must go. Concealing the vengeful rage to which his passion now turned, he feigned compliance, but on the day fixed for his departure, he bribed a small Indian boy of the major-domo's household to put arsenic into the family's midday food. The major-domo died, and his sister, together with eleven other persons, barely escaped with their lives. The murderer went unpunished, in the absence of direct evidence sufficient to impress the local Comisario, who as it happened had his own grudge against the major-domo. The avenging of the latter's death was thereupon undertaken by one of the eleven, an Argentine of English descent, who promptly set forth in dogged pursuit of the poisoner. Both disappeared into the silent places of the wilderness. The major-domo's brother took his place; his sister resumed her innocent glad eye and killing smile, and the tide of life flowed on, without a ripple of concern, over the scene of her devastating conquest. Incidents of this kind, that would furnish three days' headlines in New England, scarcely attract editorial comment in the news sheets of Asunçion.

And yet, despite his sins of omission and commission, the Paraguayan, like most of the descendants of Spanish-Indian ancestors, is a lovable and interesting specimen of humanity. The history of the race shows clearly that, given good government administered by honest men, he has in him the makings of a very decent and useful citizen. Recognising this fact, and the obvious impossibility of his ever achieving either civic decency or economic utility under existing conditions, a sympathetic observer can only ask himself, what reasonable prospect is there of anything better being evolved from the political elements at present active or latent in the State?

According to the politicians themselves, peace and prosperity await the nation at the cross-roads of the next revolution; it is always the next. But experience has repeatedly proved them to be lying prophets: the record of the *caudillos* is one long-drawn tale of sordid ambition and futile strife. There has been vitality and to spare, and bloodshed, but neither discipline, unity nor organised effort. All that has been evolved out of political chaos, confusion and crime since 1870, is a parasitical bureaucracy, blind leaders of the blind. What then? Dictatorship, in which South American writers like Garcia Calderon see the best hopes of a stability, can only afford temporary relief; it may repress, but cannot eradicate the permanent causes of disorganisation. Even the strongest of dictators cannot hope to re-make the society which has made him; at best, he can but dominate it for a time.

Amalgamation with Argentina would probably solve most of the country's pressing material problems, and if it were not for the vested interests of demagogues and politicians, the Paraguayans might be led to see that such a solution would be all to their advantage. As matters stand, however, the process of geographical and

sympathetic gravitation tends rather towards Brazil, in which direction there lies no possible hope of moral or material salvation.

Finally, there is the prospect of gradual improvement of the country's political and economic conditions by means of European immigration. Already there are some 15,000 Italian settlers of the industrious agricultural class in the Republic, and the Government has had sense enough to learn (as Brazil is learning) that their productive industry is worth encouraging. But even for them (and far more so for the Anglo-Saxon, as the pastoral experiment of the "New Australia" Colony has proved) the attractions of the country, as at present administered, wane upon closer acquaintance. So long as Argentina and Uruguay offer better security for life and property, the fertile plains and rich forest lands of Paraguay are likely to remain in their present rudimentary state of development. But the increasing needs of this congested planet in the matter of its daily bread, and the industrial world's competition for raw materials, are such that, *pace* the Monroe doctrine and all other artificial obstructions, it is impossible to conceive that a land like this should continue much longer to be a barren stamping-ground for the wild asses of politics. The day is coming when they will have to get on or get out. The country must be redeemed to purposes of economic usefulness. Will the Guaraný people perish in the process, by caña and competition, leaving no memorials of their race, beyond the music of the names that cling to their rivers?

The conscientious traveller who has come to Asunçion by the Paraná and who wishes to see as much of Paraguay as possible, may return to Buenos Aires by the railway line (Paraguay's ewe lamb), on which a through train runs weekly, with restaurant and sleeping-cars, via Encarnaçion

on the Alto Paraná. It is a journey which affords interesting snap-shot glimpses of the unblossoming wilderness, and, on the Argentine side, of cattle-ranching in the grand manner; but the road is monotonous and decidedly bumpy. Those who know it usually prefer the river.

On the day before my departure from Asunçion, being by that time attuned to the leisurely moods of the people, I sauntered into the telegraph office to despatch a message to Buenos Aires. There had been a *creciente* this side of Corrientes, and rumour had it that the Paraguayan lines were not working. On this point no information was forthcoming; the clerk, sucking thoughtfully at his maté, finally accepted the telegram for transmission, "without responsibility." From thence I proceeded to the office of the Mihanovitch steamer line (latest of modern Conquistadores) to book a berth for Corrientes. The languid clerk looked up from his newspaper, and keeping a careful finger on the line at which he was so unkindly interrupted, observed, more in sorrow than in anger, "We do not sell tickets until to-morrow." Whereupon he resumed his reading. Next morning I returned to find him feverishly making up arrears of work, for the steamer which cleared at sunset. He was evidently not accustomed to be disturbed in the fine frenzy of an effort like this. "I am busy now, Señor," he said, without looking up; "come again this afternoon." A week ago this sort of thing might have stirred one to indite a futile remonstrance; now, having achieved a philosophy superior to the Time machine, you shrug your shoulders gracefully and go your ways in peace.

As to your telegram, you discover in due course that it was despatched by post, on the same steamer by which you left, and was delivered at Buenos Aires two days after your arrival. After all, what does it matter? *Tout*

*s'arrangé*. Nevertheless, you wonder whether your foolish dollars eventually found their way into the public funds of "Paz y Justicia," or into the privy purse of the clerk "without responsibility." Let us give him the benefit of a "not-proven" doubt.

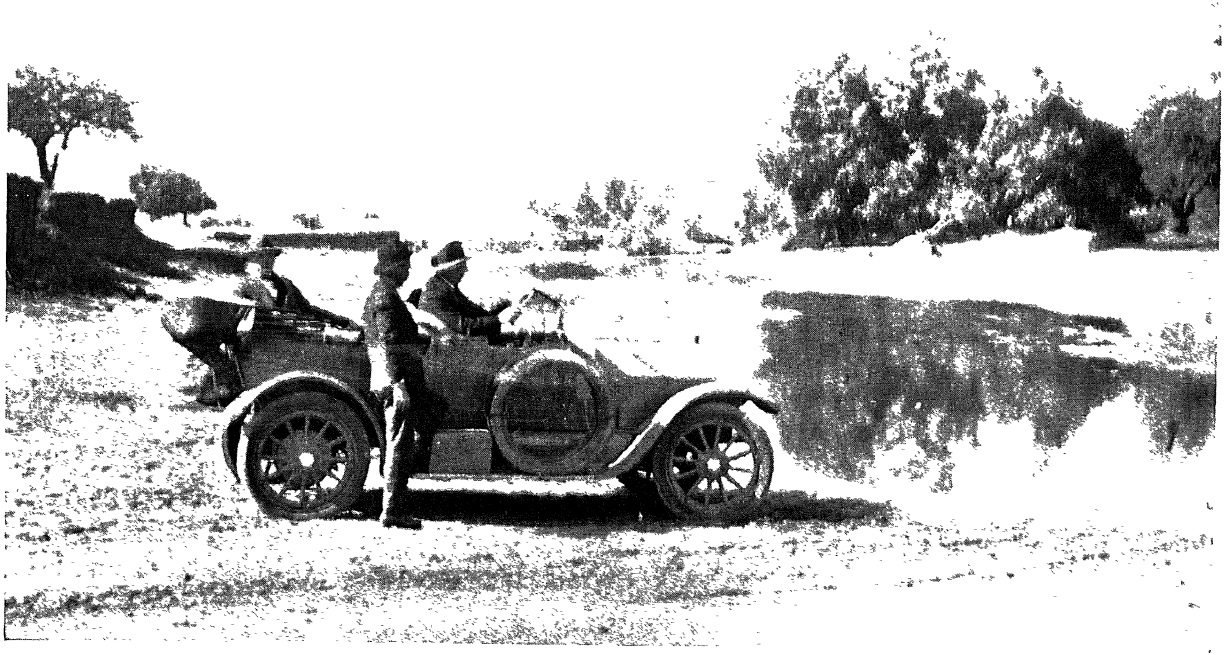
As the good ship *Berna* glides swiftly down the Chaco shores, threading its way amongst little islands of floating water-weeds and driftwood, we watch the evening mist, like a garment "of white samite, mystic, wonderful," shrouding the waving Pampas grass and *tala* thickets in its soft clinging folds. A pallid moon casts its sheen of silver on the waters; the chattering parliaments of parroquets are stilled, and all the ghostly wilderness flits past in mysterious silence. At such an hour it is given to us wayfarers to perceive something of the remote causes of the *mañana* philosophy, and to accept it for better or for worse.

## CHAPTER IX

### ASUNÇION TO MONTEVIDEO OVERLAND

FROM Asunçion, returning to Corrientes, I took the overland road to Montevideo, by railway first to Concordia on the Rio Uruguay, and thence by boat to the mouth of the Rio Negro, which is the jumping-off place for Mercedes. From that drowsiest of "camp" towns, the Central Uruguay Railway will take you, sooner or later, if the fates are propitious, to Montevideo.

After the teeming wealth of flora and fauna in the Chaco, to return to the almost unbroken monotony of pastoral Argentina and Uruguay is apt to be somewhat depressing at first. It is a change which produces a longing for the wings of a dove, like that which seizes a man on the first day he goes back to work in London (a foggy day, for choice) after a holiday in France. Needless to say, London and stern attention to business, with Upper Tooting and Little Bethel in the background, are more profitable and edifying than Paris in the long run, even as the flocks and herds of the *estancias*, that run in endless succession from Corrientes to Concordia, are more profitable than all the magnificent extravagance of the Chaco. Granted that all really good things and people are plain, one needs a little time to get used to them, after the other kind. Of course, every *estanciero* will tell you that no two *estancias* are really alike, and that this impression of monotonous sameness lies not in them, but in the undiscerning eye of the uninitiated; just as sailors explain the subtle differences which doubtless exist, but which the land-lubber



CROSSING A RIVER IN THE DRY SEASON, URUGUAY

[*To face p.* 166.

cannot see, between ships. I do not mean to say that *estancia* life is monotonous—far from it—but I maintain that the general aspect of the country, especially when exhibited as a moving picture seen from the railway, is about as exhilarating as that of the great wheat belt in Canada or the steppes of the Ukraine, and should you chance to pass this way at a time of serious drought, when the land lies brown and parched and the cattle wander miserably by the waterless *cañadas*, seeking the last patches of pasture, the scene is one that haunts the memory like an evil dream.

But the chief cause of the inevitable impression of flatness in the "camp" which is apt to depress sensitive souls, lies in the scarcity of trees. A country may flow with milk and honey, but if it lacks trees, it is like a woman who lacks hair, deficient in something essential to our complete satisfaction. If I were a ruler in Argentina or Uruguay, I should make the planting of trees a matter not of exhortation, but of rigorous compulsion, and exempt all *montes* from taxation for the next fifty years. Orchards and vineyards are not to be demanded from districts subject to devastating invasions of locusts, but tall poplars and eucalyptus, planted with discrimination, make all the difference to the landscape; moreover, for trees that gather to a shade, there are several natives immune from locusts, such as the ancient mystic *ombú*, the *paraiso*, and the hardwood *ñadabay*, all well worth the trouble of planting and fencing. Darwin endeavoured to explain the absence of trees throughout the grassy pampean plain as the result of the violence of the south-west *pampero*, which is obviously absurd. Other puzzled observers have ascribed it to the destruction of saplings by hares and other rodents, but as rodents are not confined to the pampas, this theory is equally untenable. My own tentative idea on the subject is,

that the son of the soil in general, and the lordly Gaucho in particular, sees no particular virtue in trees except as firewood; that he prefers his native plains unencumbered by obstacles which obstruct the view, or the lasso, of the cattle-ranger, and that he regards tree-planting as a business which Nature evidently intended the wind and the birds to attend to, since it cannot be done by a man on horseback. At every railway station you will see the exhortatory advertisements of the scientific arboriculture establishment at Toledo, offering over a hundred different kinds of tree for sale, but it is rare to find more than twenty species on any *estancia*, even where the property includes a long stretch of wooded river bank.

Trees have increased in these parts of recent years, and especially since the war sent the price of coal up to a figure which gave the railways the alternative of using wood fuel or going out of business. But even to-day you may see wide stretches of country where the "camp" lies bare and level to a featureless horizon, so that the sight of a solitary *ombú*, or row of poplars, marking the approach to an *estancia*, becomes a positive relief to the eye. Under these conditions you get a vague impression of vast distances, but there is no grandeur in the outlook; also you know that even this impression of vastness is a delusion, because, the more level the plain, the closer the limits of your horizon. And if you should happen to be of a speculative turn of mind, the question inevitably arises, how far is the unbroken sameness of the scene, throughout the pasture lands that run from the Atlantic half-way to the Andes, responsible for the narrowness of outlook which undoubtedly obtains among many of these dwellers of the pampas? To what extent is the mind of the resident —native or colonist, padron or peon—oppressed, and inclined to parochial smallness, by the nature of his en-

vironment? I confess that I find it difficult to account in any other way for the kind of mental sleeping sickness that one frequently observes, combined with complete self-satisfaction, in individuals whose landed rights extend over an area half the size of an English county, or for the extraordinarily limited range of general conversation in the " camp." The existence of these limitations is recognised by the communities concerned, for extreme cases are frequently described as suffering from " camp-rot," and the remedy usually prescribed is a trip to Europe. In the case of married couples, the effect of several continuous years of unbroken " camp " life often amounts, humanly speaking, to general atrophy of the thinking apparatus.

Railway travel in South America is not as luxurious a business as people might infer from contemplating the lavish lordliness of Argentines travelling in Europe. There are one or two show lines, like the São Paulo line in Brazil and the Central Argentine, but, generally speaking, a train is constructed and regarded simply as a means of transport, and, like the ordinary camp-town hotel, does not indulge in any frills and fads. The line from Corrientes to Concordia, on the Argentine North-Eastern, like all railways in these parts, was badly hit by the war, and compelled to adapt itself to the use of wood fuel when English coal shipments ceased. At first they managed to get coal from Natal at £4 a ton, but after three shiploads of this, the export was stopped, so the Company bought up a tract of forest and built branch lines for hauling the timber, eventually succeeding in producing the wood equivalent of a ton of coal for about 38*s.* with considerable benefit to local labour. In this they were luckier than other lines, such as the Central Uruguay, which could not procure sufficient wood and was therefore compelled to cut down the through passenger service to one or two

trains a week. But making every allowance for war-time difficulties, the line to Concordia did not come up to modern ideas of rational comfort in 1916. The way the cars jolted and bumped, even when going at a modest pace, was enough to justify any one in asking for a refund of the price charged for a sleeper. It seems that the cost of solid ballasting is prohibitive, so that the line is laid lightly with 55-lb. rails. One gets the impression, beyond the paying sections of passenger traffic, such as the Cordova and Rosario lines, that the railway companies take more thought for a stalled ox than for the sons of men; and as the travelling public seems quite content with things as they are, no doubt they are right.

Even before the North-East Argentine and the Entre Rios Railways came to Concordia, this town was the chief depôt and port of shipment for the *estancieros* of Entre Rios. Either because of its position and prospects, or by some special dispensation of Providence, it appears to have attracted a type of citizen more energetic and wideawake than those of other towns which live by handling the produce of the interior. Its prosperity and enterprise are indicated by many things that are conspicuous by their absence in most of the mouldy old towns that lie scattered throughout the pampas region. Good streets, well paved and decently lighted, handsome shops, plenty of private motor-cars; and for public hire good clean carriages, with first-rate horses, at moderate fares. But even here, nobody seems to bother about drains or a public water supply, and the hotels are of a kind to which a traveller may bid a long farewell without undue repining. Nevertheless, the place itself lingers in one's mind with a subtle charm and fragrance of its own, making one of those alluring pictures which every wanderer stores in his treasure-house of memories and dreams. The people,

as I took the air in the Plaza at the hour of the evening *apéritif*, seemed not only more alive, but much more human, than the typical *hijo del pais ;* not only did they walk more alertly, but there was in their carriage, especially that of the hatless women, something unusually vital, suggestive of the slender graceful vivacity of old Spain. As I watched the gilded youth of the place taking its accustomed stroll round the square, young men and maidens discreetly apart, as usual under the watchful eye of plump and pleasing duennas, paterfamilias taking his vermouth the while at the alfresco café which does a brisk business on the sidewalk, it was borne in upon me that, compared to us Anglo-Saxons, these people are an extremely ornamental race, and graceful in all their ways. Politically speaking, the results of the fusion of Spanish blood with that of the aboriginal Indians may leave something to be desired, but the physical results are undeniably pleasing. And these people are fond of the sunshine, and of children, of music and dogs, all of which things they enjoy here in cheerful profusion, when the day's work is done and the Plaza becomes, in a sense, the town's co-operative parlour, a social clearing-house.

Dogs figure conspicuously in the life of the community, both at Corrientes and Concordia, dogs of all sizes and breeds, together with curs of that low degree which results from the untrammelled liberty and licence of an *estancia* dog's life. Dog-fights are among the most notable occurrences in the social life of " camp " towns like Mercedes, which, even at the Plaza hour, give one the impression of being only partly awakened from a long siesta and on the point of going to sleep again. I have often tried to discover, but so far in vain, why dogs are so numerous, and their society evidently appreciated, in towns like Corrientes, Concordia and Mercedes, whilst in Buenos Aires they are

comparatively scarce, and in Montevideo still more so. Some say that the explanation lies in the fact that in the smaller towns a dog-owner can evade the licence tax ($10), like other imposts, by making friends of the local mammon of unrighteous officialdom; but this ingenious suggestion does not really explain why wealthy Montevideo should go about dogless, why even the stoutest Señora's automobile should lack its appropriate decoration of a Pom or Pekinese.

From Concordia I passed down the Rio Uruguay, first (because the river was low) in a small light-draught vessel, as far as the spot where the water deepens and the pucka Buenos Aires river steamer, very palatial after the American manner, took us aboard. The small boat was very dirty and crowded, but none the less interesting on that account. The majority of its passengers were of the world which lives by and for the slaughter of cattle. All along the river, at Salto, Colon, Paysandú, and Fray Bentos, there are huge *saladeros*, where all day long and every day, poor beasts, terrified by the far-flung smell of blood, go by thousands to their doom, in order that millions of men, engaged in scientifically slaughtering each other on the other side of the world, may go to their graves well fed. I suggested this aspect of the matter to a *saladero* manager, a naturalised Argentine of English descent. He was a man of parts, not unversed in the humanities, but as regards his business sternly utilitarian and cosmopolitan. I gathered, incidentally, that the bulk of his buyers were German.

At midnight, in a torrential downpour of rain, the palatial river-boat dropped three miserable passengers and some cargo for Mercedes at the mouth of the Rio Negro; thus we passed from Argentina to Uruguay. Apart from the weather, Uruguay's transport arrangements at this point are not of a kind to precipitate any riotous enthu-

siasm for the Banda Oriental. We found ourselves upon a mouldy old tug-boat, a noisome craft, full of cockroaches and bilge-water, with three hours' journey between us and Mercedes. The crew were clearly of opinion that no good purpose would be served by reaching that bustling spot before breakfast time, also that navigation by night is perilous, for no sooner were we on board than they resumed, somewhere in the bowels of the ship, the game of poker which our arrival had interrupted. The steward, drunken and semi-torpid, who did the honours of the murky cabin, decorated with card chips and cigar ends and a strong smell of caña, declined to produce tea, coffee or any other kind of refreshment, being evidently anxious to resume his hand in the game as quickly as possible. The so-called cabins were cupboards, just large enough to hold a bunk and several thousand cockroaches; their doors refused to shut and the rain came through the upper decks; so, in the intervals of fitful sleep, we prayed for the dawn. It came, and the bedraggled steward celebrated it by making some milk-less coffee for which, as a very necessary precaution, he collected payment in advance.

Mercedes loomed through a clammy fog at 7.30 a.m.; the eye of faith and hope could discern three or four pre-historic carriages of sorts gathered to a conversational centre on a melancholy-looking wharf. An hour later, the ship's leisurely preparations for discharge being completed, a couple of languid Customs officers loomed up, and after a cursory look at our baggage, and much ceremonious exchange of courtesies between them and the other passengers, who were natives of the town, we were made free of the Republic of Uruguay and proceeded to seek bath and breakfast at the Hôtel de Paris. There we found la Señora Padrona and her offspring tranquilly busy with their morning maté in a *patio* curiously sugges-

tive of the Orient, with its palm and ferns and an aviary filled with cardinals, toldos and other song-birds. The hotel is built so that every one shall have the benefit of the cheerful sights and sounds of this inner court, the bedrooms on the upper storey all opening on to the balcony which overlooks it. The only light which penetrates these rooms, and those on the ground floor, is the half-light of the shaded *patio*, cool and pleasant, no doubt, in summer, but on a rainy winter's day a trifle depressing. One of the most unaccountable things about this country in the way in which native architecture persists in the Spanish tradition of ignoring provision against cold weather. It is the same in the towns as in the rural districts; houses are always built on the principle that protection against the sun is the one thing needful. And this in a land where for three months of the year at least the south wind brings a very penetrating cold, and frosts are quite common.

Of all the mildewed, moth-eaten holes that make one wonder what Columbus redivivus would think of the fruits of his labours, Mercedes has undeniable claims to pre-eminence. In most ways the town is a fair type of those which have grown up along the main waterways and railways, to supply the wants and handle the produce of the "camp," but it possesses a seven-sleeper quality of torpor which so far as my limited observation goes, is unrivalled by any of its peers. In outward appearance it is, of course, like all other "camp" towns. Its houses are nearly all of one pattern and height, painted stucco buildings, with little balconies to the windows of the upper storey and heavy ironwork grilles securing the lower ones against burglars and lordly wooers. Each has its little flower and fern bedecked *patio*, of which you catch cool and refreshing glimpses, through doorways that open

to the street, all the more alluring because of the dreary monotony of the street itself. In the Plaza, which always typifies and reflects, so to speak, the civic life of a South American town, there is a perfunctory statue of Liberty, bearing on its pedestal all the memorable dates which have set—or were meant to have set—the feet of the Republic on the high-road to Utopia. But the formal flower-beds, without which no self-respecting Plaza is complete, have either proved too much for the energies of the civic gardener or too great a strain on the exchequer, for they are not; only some rusty benches are there and a weather-beaten band-stand. The Cathedral is undergoing repairs. All cathedrals seem to require continual attention in this climate; anti-clericals will tell you that the fact is closely connected with Church and State finance. The few battered old carriages that ply for hire look as if funerals were their speciality; occasionally the dogs and the dignified drowsiness of the place are rudely disturbed for a moment by some Ford car, coming in from the " camp." It draws up at the *confiteria* by the corner of the Plaza, where two or three of the railway staff are playing dominoes (there are only three through passenger trains a week nowadays), and for a few moments there are signs of life. Men emerge leisurely from shops and cafés and stroll across the Square, to pass the time of day with Don Felipe or Don Enrique, as the case may be.

They say that Mercedes is a hundred years old and that it contains 15,000 inhabitants. If so, one can only wonder where they are and what they do with themselves all the day long, for both the Plaza and the Rambla (the broad promenade which runs along the river bank) have a curiously unfrequented appearance, even at the hour when one would naturally expect to find all the world and his wife taking the air. It may be—who knows?—that both

the population and the promenade have purposely been exaggerated, as the result of the strange competitive pride of place from which the best of towns are not exempt; but whatever the explanation, Mercedes on a winter's morning is about as lively as a mortuary chapel. Even when one has made all possible allowance for one's own ignorance of the real inwardness of things and of the true conditions of life in this amazing sleepy hollow, when one has been told that practically all the revenues of the City Fathers available for public works are drawn from a 3 per cent. tax on rentals, there are some things about Mercedes that only sleeping sickness can account for. The history of the Rowing Club is a striking case in point. It was organised as the result of an energetic crusade by an Englishman, Professor of English and Instructor of Gymnastics at the local College. The idea was welcomed with all the fervent enthusiasm which distinguishes the South American on such occasions, subscriptions rolled in, a fine list of members was published, and four boats were ordered from England. But when they came out, and the prospect of serious physical exertion became dangerously imminent, some of the members remembered important business, and others that they had married a wife, and eventually the list dwindled to eight stalwarts. And when it came to picking crews, each and every one of the eight firmly declined to be anything but cox. Eventually the boats were sold, and the Rowing Club passed silently into oblivion.

And again, what explanation other than cobwebbed inertia can account for the fact that a town of this size is content to depend chiefly upon Montevideo and Buenos Aires for its supply of fresh vegetables, poultry and pork? There is evidently a fortune waiting here for an energetic market gardener and dairy farmer, but so far as one can

see, no sign of any one wanting to earn it. Scotchmen please note. The price of apples—poor things at best—was 80 cents (nearly four shillings) a dozen in May 1916, and the cost of tomatoes, potatoes, milk, eggs and other things equally high. Even if the physical and mental initiative is lacking to make the community self-supporting in the matter of these necessities, one would have thought that here and there an energetic Italian might have seized the opportunity to cultivate a lucrative *quinta*, for every housewife in the place will call upon all the saints to witness that the dealers of Buenos Aires are thieves and robbers.

And lastly, observe the Rambla, where the mystery deepens and one wonders how a race so instinctively and naturally graceful and artistic can tolerate so hideous a defacement of a scene that might so easily be made a thing of beauty. It would only require trees and shrubs in the right place, a good stone facing and wrought ironwork balustrade, to make a promenade in which the citizens might take pleasure and pride. As it is, the place is a monument in mud and monstrous decoration to the gods of noontide slumber and insouciance. The City Fathers, or whoever is supposed to attend to these things, have permitted an Italian *mecanico* to carry out a scheme of decoration framed on the Coney Island model, with hideous biograph kiosks, coloured glass fountains, merry-go-rounds, penny-in-the-slot machines, and other abominations. And as all the water front is littered with the débris cast up by the river in its last *creciente*, the general effect is rather that of the approach to an Alaskan mining camp than that of a respectable town with a cathedral and a hundred years of corporate life. The most picturesque object in Mercedes, typical too in its way, is the hull of an Italian steamer, lying high and dry, twenty yards above the river, where the floods left it years ago.

As a general rule, the traveller stranded for a day in a town like this may get a considerable amount of human interest and diversion by the simple process of sitting at the *sala* window, or on the balcony overlooking the street, and " making time," as they say, by watching men and events. For even in the dullest of sleepy hollows, there is always something doing, something that gives one gently to think, some new sidelight thrown on the human comedy. But here, not being the possessor of a *sala* or street-commanding balcony, and having exhausted all the resources of the town long before siesta time, I sought and found refuge from boredom in watching la Señora Padrona of the Hôtel de Paris at the handling of her business and her family, and the entertainment of numerous friends and clients, who looked in apparently for no particular purpose and remained for the same good reason. A " clane, dacent woman " is the Señora; who speaks cheerfully, yet as one having authority, to all men, takes her leisurely maté at all hours, and yet brings up her family like Christians and keeps her household in good order. On further acquaintance she proved to be something of a philosopher, which, in a woman, means one who has reached the half-way house of Wisdom that stands between the states of uncomfortable fussiness and unseemly sloth.

During the day, her own offspring being at school, Madame's maternal, sociable and human instincts became greatly concerned with a little family—father, mother and three children—who had come from a neighbouring *estancia* to take the next day's train for Montevideo. From a coign of vantage on the balcony overlooking the *patio*, I also found myself gradually taking a keen interest in this family. The mother, it seems, was an invalid and going to the capital to consult a specialist; meanwhile the children (two girls of four and six years and a baby of two)

were being looked after and amused by their father, a tall handsome man of about forty, who not only played the rôle of nurse and governess to perfection, but seemed thoroughly to enjoy it. To watch these four at dinner was a lesson in good manners and the amenities of family life; the genuine *camaraderie* existing between them, the children's complete freedom from awkward shyness or pertness, and the father's evident pleasure in the success of his talents as an entertainer, were very pleasant things to see. Especially edifying was the dignity and *savoir-faire* of the little lady who played hostess. After dinner they all played games in the *patio*, and it was clear that father's education in games was no mere surface polish.

When one notes the genuine, almost Oriental philo-progenitiveness of the Latin-American peoples, the absence of serious economic pressure, the South American woman's maternal instincts and natural fecundity, and the laws which recognise and regulate the result of her mate's polygamous tendencies, one can only wonder that population in this part of the world does not increase more rapidly. Nowhere, not even in Japan, is more care and kindness displayed towards children than here. The *culto del niño* is almost a national religion and indeed something of an obsession—no public ceremony is complete without its parades and processions of school children. I imagine that from the woman's point of view (and women have much to do with education in South America) children mean more to the stability of the marriage state than they do in Anglo-Saxon communities; they stand more emphatically for the permanence of hearth and home. Even amongst the working classes in the towns, a man may be lawless and wayward, yet his affection for his children will hold the home together, as the Cinema is never weary of showing. It is probably for this reason that the cult of

the child has assumed its present importance in the social and civic life of South America. All sorts of philanthropic societies work for it in many ways, and the Press waxes very sentimental on the subject; the primary schools are generally excellent, and their discipline surprisingly good.

But there are drawbacks to the cult of *el niño*, as to most good things in a world of wickedness. In a state of society addicted to early marriages, it often happens that when the children have grown up, family life becomes dull, and the middle-aged husband, having few or none of the social and sporting alleviations that an Anglo-Saxon would take to in such case, is led to seek distractions outside it. His polygamous and philoprogenitive instincts then find satisfaction in an irregular liaison; and the law ordains that the offspring of such morganatic connections are entitled to a share of their father's property at his death. The farther you get from the seaboard and the cities, the franker becomes society's acceptance of irregular parentage. In most places there are a considerable number of surplus women, all hungry for maternity, so that the cult of *el niño* becomes a very complicated business. In the interior, and most notably in Brazil and Paraguay, one frequently hears of progenitors of the patriarchal type, whose wild and tame oats have been sown in such profusion as to give them more than local celebrity. One case of the kind I noted at Asunçion, where, at the death of one of these prolific grandsires, the number of filial claims on the estate was close upon a hundred. As in the East, barrenness in a woman affords in itself moral justification for her husband to contract new ties more or less *sub rosa*. If under these conditions the population does not double itself in twenty-five years, it must either be because the public health is imperfectly

protected in many parts of the country, or because the proportion of the male population which leads celibate or sterile lives, especially among the "camp" peon class, is larger than is commonly supposed.

The train for Montevideo leaves Mercedes at eight in the morning, being of the kind which declined to be hurried on its journeyings. It puts on no frills, this Ferro-Carril Central, either in the matter of speed or equipment; but it is a nice easy-going, hail-fellow-well-met sort of line, and when you travel on it you feel as if you had been invited to join a pleasant family circle in a Sunday sociable. Incidentally also you pick up a lot of miscellaneous information in a day's journey, because everybody in the train knows everybody else, and nearly every one has a thousand things that he wishes to talk about to any one who will listen, with much wealth of narrative and detail. At every station there is generally somebody or something worth seeing, *estancieros* of the neighbourhood coming down to see a friend *en passant* or to collect a parcel, from whose cheery conversation you gather that Don Enrique's estimable wife has joyfully presented him with twins, that Don Juan's cattle have been dying by the score, through eating of thistles, and that there is trouble at the *estancia* "Tres Montes" because of a little matter of a boundary fence removed and a "point" of sheep missing.

There are generally a few picturesque Gauchos, lounging about as gracefully as if they really had nothing to do, though their horses, tied up at the station *pulperia*, tell plainly of the long trail; the usual motley collection of dogs, revealing possibilities hitherto unsuspected in the matter of *mésalliances* and *affaires de cœur*; a couple of magisterial policemen—one hardly likes to speak of these dignitaries by that modest title; and a little group of peons, smoking eternal cigarettes—slender wiry fellows

in whose natural ease of bearing and good manners, a nice blend of simplicity and punctilio, I find never-ending pleasure, even when their clothes are horrible imported reach-me-downs and when they wear their trousers tucked into their socks (suspenders therefore in evidence) with luxuriously inefficient *zapatas* that look like Japanese shoes. These sons of the soil carry themselves like self-respecting, self-reliant free men, autocrats with the saving grace of courtesy. There are comparatively few women to be seen either on the train or at the stations.

Amongst the *estancieros* in the dining-car the conversation is nearly all " shop," yet, because of the multifarious activities of life on the " camp," and because in a gathering like this you get it reflected from several points of view, it is seldom devoid of interest or wearisome. The movement of locusts, the price of wool, the latest visitations of *garapata* (tick) or foot-and-mouth disease, the manifold diseases of sheep, droughts and floods, and, above all, as a perpetual feast, the virtues and vices of horses, these are the staples and stand-bys of conversation, wherever one or two are gathered together. Some talk there is of sport, of depredations by *bichos*, some local gossip and tales of feuds and courtships; but remarkably little, when you come to think of it, either of politics or the world war, and very little philosophy. It is an elemental world of simple things, worked out on a big scale, this world of flocks and herds, and the talk of the men who inhabit it is unsophisticated, racy of the soil, and therefore, to the stranger, edifying. It is only when they elect to talk of the horse by the hour and with appalling technicality of endless detail, that I find myself frankly bored.

The distance between Mercedes and Montevideo is roughly 150 miles, and the train takes between nine and ten hours over it. As you approach the capital,

the country becomes more plentifully dotted with clumps and groves of trees—very seldom do they attain to the dignity of little woods—and the *estancias* lose something of the air of dignified seclusion which distinguishes them further afield. After passing Santa Lucia, two or three stations from the capital, the journey ceases to be of the peaceful family party complexion, for at this point the train is invaded by an evil-smelling, raucous-tongued crowd of hotel touts, cab and taxi runners, and lottery ticket sellers, who jostle and hustle each other and pester the passengers with amazing effrontery. No doubt all these estimable cadgers are influential voters when they are at home, and very possibly the powers that be may consider it inexpedient to curtail their facilities for this kind of joy-riding. The travelling public cannot reasonably expect to receive treatment as favourable as the great unwashed, in a democratic state where political influence is all a question of numbers; but all the same, there is a point at which the lowliest worm should turn, and even a Railway Company has its dignity to preserve.

The average Uruguayan is content to take the railway as he finds it, and only abuses the Company as a monopolistic obstructor of trade development, but an impartial outsider would probably say that the public gets the service it deserves. Even under normal conditions, the Company does not make profits enough to encourage further appeals for capital from abroad, and the war price of coal added £50,000 a year to its working expenses. As a matter of fact, making due allowance for the restrictions and improvements imposed on it by officialdom, the railway management would appear to be doing its best to develop traffic in agricultural produce, and to display a very creditable amount of initiative, and the real source of its troubles, strange as it may seem, lies with the agrarians.

One need not be a prophet or an augur to perceive that the one thing needful for the development of the country (and with it of the railway) is good roads, and plenty of them, throughout the interior. I have met with *estancieros* who recognised this fundamental truth and who would be glad to contribute their fair share for a comprehensive scheme to make and maintain roads for motor lorry traffic; but as a general rule, they prefer to stick to the good old hoary system which isolates the *estancias* of any district when the rivers happen to be in flood, and which means sending produce and bringing in materials, either by slow bullock-wagons or eight-horse team, over the vilest of makeshift mud roads. One would imagine that a government which proclaims the democratic and progressive gospel according to Senor Battlé would perceive the futility of encouraging the immigration of colonists and *chacreros* (agriculturists) without first evolving a practical road-making policy. One would even think that the agrarian might be led by an educative campaign to perceive that good roads would not only bring them greatly increased wealth, but would put an end to many of the uncomfortable and unprofitable crudities of "camp" life. They don't see it, or the roads would soon be there.

Be this as it may, the Railway Station building at Montevideo is almost magnificent enough, with its statues and long marble corridors, to make one forget the slowness of the train and the price of the ticket. From the non-travelling citizen's point of view, all is surely for the best.

# CHAPTER X

## URUGUAY: SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE ART OF GOVERNMENT

COMPARED with other cities of South America, Montevideo possesses a peculiar and distinctive quality of restfulness. There is something in the general appearance and atmosphere of the place and its inhabitants that suggests the influence of a pleasant, leisurely, contemplative philosophy behind its material prosperity. The cult of *mañana* and *mas ó menos* appears to be more splendidly dignified here than elsewhere, and possibly more justified by results. To my traveller's mind, which is often pleased to think of cities as types of humanity (like the tutelary figures in the Place de la Concorde, only less classically solemn), Montevideo resembles a placid and prosperous widow, buxom, yet comely, oblivious of the past and hopeful for the future, with a fondness for good victuals, an incurable penchant for gambling, and, withal, a very fair idea of how to enjoy life. While keeping a watchful eye on Mrs. Grundy, comfort and *les convenances* are her watchwords; and if, beside these, she can contrive to keep a good conscience, all the better.

Comfort she certainly enjoys; there is probably no country on earth so well off, actually and prospectively, as Uruguay, and, on the whole, there is none in South America that has made more intelligent use of its exceptionally favourable situation and rich resources. The fact that it is only a very small country, with less than half the population of Ireland, makes its record

and position all the more enviable. Your town-bred Uruguayan is a keen politician, or, rather, a keen partisan, but the small size of the country, and the idiosyncrasies of its neighbours, have taught the Government to season socialism with common sense and to temper Chauvinism with discretion. *Mutatis mutandis*, narrow limits of territory, encompassed by powerful neighbours, have produced similar results in Switzerland, which, alone of all the democracies of Europe, has shown that government of the people, for the people, and by the people, is not an absolutely impossible ideal.

Far be it from me to suggest that Uruguayan politicians, as such, are different from or superior to those of other countries, or that Señores Battlé, Viera and Brum have travelled any further on the road to the millennium than our own leaders and misleaders of Demos. If one may judge by the things which they themselves say and write about each other, the world, the flesh and the devil are likely to be made free for democracy in these parts at about the same time as Mr. and Mrs. Wilson arrive at Utopia by way of the League of Nations and the Monroe doctrine. But there is this to be said of politics on a small scale, in a country where everybody knows and watches everybody else, that when a man becomes prominent, if he can't be good, he must be careful, and this is a fact that makes for decency and restraint. Where there is no possibility of disappearing in a crowd, respect for outward appearances is bound to play a big part in public life. Then, too, experiments in the way of social and political reform are much more satisfactory playthings here than in Europe; a dreamer of dreams, like Señor Battlé, has a far better chance of translating words into works than Briand ever could have had in France, or Lloyd George in England, for the simple reason that, in applying his theories, he is

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dealing with a prosperous community about the size of London South-West, homogenous, intellectually active, and patriotically pleased at anything which confers glory on the Banda Oriental. With money and ideas to spare, it is evidently easier for Uruguay than for China or Russia to work out interesting reforms in education, public health, or the treatment of lunatics, but this does not make the processes and results of her administrative activity any the less creditable.

On lofty heights of humanitarianism and romantic idealism, remote from the realities and unconscious of the fierceness of the struggle for life in other parts of the world, your South-American Latin builds dream castles of the most picturesque and attractive kind and fills them with happy Arcadians. The only trouble about them is that the splendid theories of government and social reform represented by Uruguay's laws and projects of law make little or no allowance for unregenerate human nature. To put it plainly, they ignore the fact that there is a good deal of the Old Adam even in the New World. The value of a law depends less upon its wording than its working, and in Uruguay the best-laid plans of earnest reformers at the Ministry of Justice or Agriculture may be brought to nought—and indeed they are—by the dishonesty of a *comisario* or the ignorance of a *juez*.

The new House of Congress, which has been in process of construction since 1906, presents an instructive object lesson, a sermon in stones, on the lamentable difference between the aspirations and the achievements of politicians. When it is finished it will, no doubt, be a very magnificent home for officialdom, but nobody seems to know or care to what length of years the contractors are going to spin out the job, which common report describes as unusually lucrative. So far as outward appearances

go, the building was in much the same state when I saw it last in June 1919, as it was in the summer of 1916. At that date the cost had already run to considerably over a million sterling. It is going to be marble-faced, all glorious without, this Palacio Legislativo, and a marvel of modern decoration within, but if half that men say about it is true, there is graft as well as art about the building of the Uruguayan House of Parliament. In this respect it would seem to be a fitting habitation for the curious admixture of lofty idealism and Tammany tricks which constitutes Uruguayan politics, for the strange medley of dreamers and schemers who represent the primitive pastoral communities of the Banda Oriental.

But despite the ultra modernity of its politicians and learned professions, despite the pretensions typified in its public buildings, Montevideo preserves far more than any other city of South America the serenity and simplicity of that life of flocks and herds which lies all around and about it; nor is this remarkable when one remembers that this is Uruguay's only city, and that its inhabitants—representing about a quarter of the country's population—live and have their being on, by, and because of, the "camp." Such "idle rich" as there are have generally made their money directly or indirectly out of *estancias*; the bulk of the city's trade lies in handling the produce of the rolling *potreros*, or in importing such things as *estancieros* need. All industry and economics being centred in the production of food in the grand patriarchal manner, society, even when it gets its gowns from Paris and pays $50 to hear Caruso, naturally retains a good deal of the pastoral atmosphere, many of the qualities and defects of the simple, tribal mind. Thus, men and women in Montevideo know all about each other, just as people do in Ireland; their conversation bristles with

genealogical details and revels in a horribly accurate memory for family skeletons. Strictly speaking, society has not emerged beyond the stage of a conglomeration of family parties, and this chiefly because of the position imposed upon (and generally accepted by) woman under the existing patriarchal system. Which subject is entitled to a chapter to itself, *infra*.

The Plaza Matriz—Mother of all the Plazas, whose plane trees and *paraisos* make oases of grateful shade throughout the city—seems to me to illustrate and typify the unsophisticated conservatism which counts for more in the real life of the nation than the latest panaceas extracted by Battlé and his henchmen from the wisdom of Mr. Wilson, Lloyd George, Liebknecht and Lenin. It is only a little Plaza, devised by the Spaniards on the same modest scale which made the streets just wide enough for two *caballeros* or *coches* to pass each other comfortably; it is not half the size of the Plaza Independencia, where the band plays amidst waving palms. But it remains, nevertheless, the centre of social and civic life, a pleasant place of green grass, and flower-beds gathered about a graceful fountain, where able-bodied loafers can take their ease, and see the doings of the outside world recorded on the *Razon's* news-boards without stirring from their seats. There is a good deal of hustle and bustle about the Plaza, besides the *Razon's* breezy bulletins; tramways that seem to run on endless chains, with clamorous bells that remind one of the nightmare chaos at Brooklyn Bridge; hotels, clubs and fashionable shops, and a line of taxi-cabs that might easily be mistaken for private cars. But amidst and above them all, facing each other across the square with the quiet dignity of reverend seigneurs that have seen many a prelate and politician strut and fret his little hour before passing to oblivion,

stand the Cathedral and the "Representacion Nacional." They have witnessed the decline and fall of the power of Spain, these two, they have seen the birth and childhood of the Republic, and both have known better days; but they seem, nevertheless, to smile confidently at each other above the clamour of the news-boys and lottery ticket touts and to typify that fundamental and philosophic quality of restfulness which is distinctive of Montevideo. The Government in power may build itself new palaces, it may ban the Church and abolish all religious festivals, but these two old aristocrats look down serenely on their native Plaza, where, whatever men may do, the evening breezes sing softly as ever in the plane trees and the blue of heaven is not dimmed by the warring of sects and factions. No doubt they have their own opinion as to the benefits which humanity is likely to derive from party politics, as perfected in the twentieth century.

Far be it from me to profess to understand the actual differences which separate the "Colorados" from the "Blancos" in this part of the world. I expect that, if the truth were told, they would appear to be no more fundamental or vital than the differences which distinguish the advanced Liberalism of our Runcimans and McKennas from the advanced Conservatism of our Birkenheads and Bonar Laws. Stripped of all verbiage, the essential differences between the parties seem to be that the Reds are In and the Whites are Out. Since the last revolution (1905) the Blancos have been palely loitering in the wilderness; the Colorados have got control of the till, and, to judge by their activity and organisation at the capital, they are likely to keep it. From this it may be inferred that party politics in the Banda Oriental have not yet attained to that superior stage of evolution in

which the leaders on both sides agree to keep up the game of befooling the electorate and to divide the proceeds on the Rotatavist, or "Front Benches, Limited," principle. Despite the undoubted ability and imitative talents of Señor Battlé and his chief adherents, the policy of the Colorado party appears to be based upon the rudimentary plan of getting your opponent down and sitting on his stomach.

Outside of Montevideo, amongst the healthy-minded workers, by and upon whose labour the talkers thrive, you will generally hear men speak of politicians as they speak of lawyers, as necessary evils, crafty animals, without whom the complicated affairs of city-dwellers could not be regulated; but their plans and stratagems are usually considered unworthy of attention or discussion by honest open-air men. In many of the provinces the Blancos are numerically stronger than the Colorados, but possession is nine parts of the electoral law, and the "Ins" have got a very firm hold on the machinery of representation. In these regions one hears vague talk of the revolution that is always coming, but, as times go, there are not enough sufficiently discontented people in Montevideo to organise one; the Colorados are shrewd enough to realise the virtues of a *panem et circenses* policy and to cast their bread upon waters that will return it in the form of votes. From the point of view of productive industry and of peace-loving citizens, it may be a good thing that the "Ins" should dominate the "Outs" by a considerable margin of effective force, but, *pace* all earnest democrats, this state of affairs can only be maintained by virtue of the preponderance of one man's authority—visible or invisible; in other words, by something akin to a dictatorship, and by relegating all the essentials of representative government to the limbo of the unattainable. Señor

Battlé may be all the evil personages rolled into one of whom his enemies speak, but he certainly seems entitled to considerable credit for the leadership which has kept the Colorados in the saddle so long and the country free from civil strife.

Battlé is a new species of political ruler, very different from dictators of the Rosas and Lopez, or even the Porfirio Diaz, type, yet a very effective ruler for all that, and all the more remarkable because of the fact that the control which he exercises over the Colorado party is ostensibly that of a private citizen. His is the ascendancy of an extremely astute politician, who combines great organising ability with a forty-Wilson power of fanatical idealism, and both with the primordial cunning of his Indian ancestry. The Uruguayan Constitution, aiming to prevent any citizen of the Republic from enjoying too long a period of power, does not permit Battlé to become President again, but there is nothing, either in the Constitution or in the present evolution of the nation's political consciousness, to prevent his personality from continuing to dominate, as it does, the whole policy of the Government. The last two Presidents—Viera and Brum—have held office by his good pleasure, and, if report speaks truly, carried out at his bidding the experiments in socialistic legislation which are the breath of his nostrils. In private life a hard-working, domesticated person of retiring habit, *bon père de famille*; a dreamer of dreams, and yet a very forceful character. Judging by results, he shares with many of the forceful characters conspicuous in our modern world of politics a hasty intolerance of detail and the contempt for all previous human experience in sociology, which eagerly proclaims the advent of the new era and leaves to others the task of estimating its cost and probable consequences. Speaking as an out-

sider, and without means of knowing for certain how much of Battlé is sincere idealist and how much predatory politician, the moral basis of his schemes, the source of his authority, and the general tenor of his ordinances appear to be just as unimpeachable as (shall we say) those of Mr. Lloyd George, and indeed to bear a curious family likeness thereto; but the trouble is, that the laws which he has made, and those which he continues to make by proxy, are based on the erroneous assumption that the bureaucracy is sufficiently educated to apply, and the nation to observe, them. A marble-faced Palace of Justice and the most elaborate of judicial codes will not serve to protect industrious citizens, either from unjust judges or from grafters in high places.

If you ask a Blanco what are his grievances against the Colorados, he will tell you that they are greedy and godless schemers, who secure the votes of the industrial town-bred workers, and especially of the aliens among them, by shameless sops and bribes and by legislation which is the epitome of class jealousy and malice. If you ask a Colorado what he thinks of the Blancos, he will tell you that they are a priest-ridden lot of mediæval money-grubbers, and that their policy is simply the maintenance of the capitalist class in its unjust privileges. But contemplate the whole business in a spirit of philosophical detachment, and you perceive that the real struggle is precisely the same as that which industrialism, so-called democracy, and the defective education of the masses have produced in Europe, a blind struggle between the Haves and the Have-nots, in which civilisation is cast into the melting-pot and sends a good deal of its scum to the top. You perceive in Uruguay, and all the more clearly because causes and results are worked out on a small scale, that the real trouble of modern democracy

lies in the fact that its godfathers, in their haste, omitted to provide for its education in discipline and the duties of citizenship, not to speak of elementary economics. So that the mob, in choosing its rulers, is unable to distinguish between wise men and windbags, between earnest patriots and fanatical dreamers.

Uruguay's representative at the Versailles conference, Dr. Varela Acevedo, an earnest patriot and a thinker, took pride in reminding the European Powers that many of the reforms which the League of Nations is to bring about, in the way of international legislation for Labour, have already been introduced in Uruguay. And it was with no small satisfaction that Uruguayans of all parties read in their morning papers, that President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George were good enough to congratulate Dr. Acevedo and the Republic on the progressive nature of its social legislation. Now, there is no doubt at all as to the laudable motives of the worthy gentlemen who frame these reform laws, or as to the lofty sentiments which they embody. But even those who look upon Republican Constitutions as milestones on the road to the millennium, must admit that the value of a law depends upon the possibility of its just and general application. (Young China, you may remember, drew up a perfectly splendid constitution, providing against original sin and all other human ills, before it proceeded to embark upon its career of chaos, corruption and crime.) And every Uruguayan (unless he be a politician on the " In " side) will tell you that, between the law as framed and the law as applied, there is wide gulf fixed, which only the blind eye of political prejudice can fail to discern. Any one with an inclination and time to spare to study *in extenso* the latest developments of the Uruguayan Constitution, will find them in a book published by a Professor of Consti-

tutional Law at Buenos Aires this year (*El gubierno del Uruguay*—a study of the Reform of the Constitution in 1917, by Professor de Vedia y Mitre).

If I deal at this length with the political aspect of affairs in Uruguay, it is because, when we come to leave the capital, and return, so to speak, to our muttons, out yonder in the "camp," amongst the simple-minded men who live and move in large clean spaces, the fact confronts us at every turn (though these herdsmen and tillers of the soil perceive it not, or only very dimly) that for all the Government's boasts of progressive legislation, the vital interests of the country's essential business of cattle-raising and agriculture are recognised in theory, but generally neglected in practice. While the Legislature, with its noble head in the clouds and its hands (some of them, at all events) in the public till, produces model statutes concerning the eight-hours day, old age pensions, the *repos hebdomadaire*, compulsory education, and benefits of all kinds for organised labour, the fundamental business of stimulating agricultural production, and of protecting the peon and *chacreros*, producers of the nation's wealth, advances but seldom beyond the region of sterile academics and the appointment of ever-increasing inspectors, commissions and battening bureaucrats. Two facts stand out in Uruguay so that he who runs may read. First, that the value of large sections of grazing land has been, and is being, seriously reduced by the growth of *espartillo* grass and noxious weeds, and that only by ploughing and sowing can its proper productivity be restored. Second, that until adequate means of transport are provided, beginning with good roads, agriculture, beyond a range of, say, fifteen miles from a railway, can never pay. It is evident that the more people there are who expect to make a living out of politics, the less public money there

will be to be spent on improvements beneficial to the community. For this reason, and others to which we shall come in due course, all the progressive social legislation, with which Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Wilson have been so pleased, dies away, in faint echoes of sonorous platitudes, long before it reaches the son of the soil. And yet it is the latter's labour, when all is said and done, which pays for the motor-car and the top-hat of the legislator when he goes a-racing to Maroñas on Sundays. And even of the statutes and ordinances devised for the benefit of the town-bred proletariat, some, such as Dr. Varela's boasted female labour law, exist, so far, only as pious aspirations, the airy nothings of professional word-spinners; others, like the eight-hours day, were never intended to apply beyond the borders of industrial labour, and, even there, their interpretation is often extremely elastic.

Of course, it is all a matter of degree. All over the world, as it stands to-day, the question for governments to decide is how many of the people can be fooled with impunity, and for how long; and the answer depends chiefly on the kind of education provided by the last generation. Then, too, the nature of the flapdoodle, with which masses of foolish electors are fed, requires careful selection; wherein lies the craft and subtlety of the politician. The stuff that Sun-Yat-Sen ladles out to Young China, for example, would not suit the digestion of the cultured millions who swallow the sophistries of Mr. Wilson. But no matter which road we travel, the further we go towards that distant goal where the remnants of civilisation are going to be safe for democracy, the more apparent it becomes that Demos does not ask consistency of his leaders. Most South American politicians have learned this lesson; nevertheless, as a simple stranger

and a student of human affairs, I often find myself amazed, here as in England, at the cynicism with which they display their contempt for the intelligence of the public, and traffic on the lamentable shortness of its memory.

Take, for instance, the question of public gambling—of which matter Dr. Varela said nothing at Versailles. In the sacred name of charity, the Government owns and runs a fashionable seaside hotel at the Parque Urbano, with a roulette casino attached thereto, which rakes in a profit of anything between 100,000 and 200,000 pesos (gold) every month; a second establishment of the same kind, only more magnificent, is about to be opened at Carrasco. Now, speaking for myself, I regard these palatial gambling houses as benevolent institutions, because they provide a means of recovering money from the idle rich and redistributing it quickly for the benefit of the community. I like to watch the pompous Porteño, the Basque *estanciero*, and the Spanish money-lender, succumbing to their ruling passion, and to see their money going swiftly back into circulation. The little white ball, spinning merrily, when they have dined well to light sounds of music, is probably the only instrument of retributive justice that will meet their case. I like to see it doing its good and useful work, just as I like to see the plethoric wealth of our Jewish financiers and impresarios diminished by an almost human devotion to some capricious star of the musical comedy world. As a matter of morals, there is all the difference in the world between a roulette table run for the public benefit and one, like that of Monte Carlo, run for the benefit of private shareholders. The Uruguayan authorities have practically put roulette on the same footing as the Gothenberg system has put drinking in Scandinavia; incidentally, by so doing, they attract a good deal of Argentine money

into the Uruguayan till. So far, so good; to take money from the wealthy for public purposes is meritorious. But their systematic cultivation of the gambling instinct amongst the poorer classes by means of ubiquitous and never-ceasing public lotteries is a very different matter; and the offence is greatly aggravated by all these continual boasts about social reform and by the Government's professions of solicitude for the moral welfare of the people.

When you buy a box of matches—on which the Government levies a tax of five milesimos—you find yourself confronted by a moral maxim of unimpeachable virtue printed on the inner flap; some pious exhortation to honesty, or kindness to animals, or sober thrift. And in the same shop, you will observe a placard reminding you that to-morrow's lottery places a fortune within the reach of every man's hand. There is a lottery every week; the price of the tickets varies (being nicely calculated on the public's probable margin of savings) and the first prize may be anything between 20,000 pesos and the big New Year prize of 300,000 pesos—a little matter of £70,000 at the present rate of exchange. The sale of lottery tickets is pushed with a good deal more energy than is usual in government business. Ragged children and cripples thrust them at you, with raucous cries, at every street corner; hawkers shout the value of the first prize and the date of drawing on trains and trams and wharves. The number of shops that apparently make a living by selling them on a 4 per cent. commission, and by changing money, is as mysteriously great as the number of public-houses in Belfast or Glasgow—one feels that there cannot possibly be enough customers to go round. But the business goes steadily on, and as neither the match-box maxims nor the eloquence of professional

moralists have ever affected it in the slightest degree, they may fairly be regarded as a harmless concession to the theory of political virtue, an inexpensive kind of eyewash.

Or, since we are in the way with professions of progress and social reform, take the case of the unmarried mother and her offspring. It is a subject which Dr. Varela might well have discussed at Versailles, rather than that of the regulating of female labour. The latter is never likely to become practical politics (woman having no vote, and little chance of ever getting one), whereas since the Government decided to treat the Church as an obsolete institution, the marriage rate has gone down, and the percentage of illegitimate children has gone steadily up. Now, amongst the executive's most eloquent claims to public virtue, solicitude for the welfare of children takes a prominent place. *El culto del niño*, as I have remarked before, is almost an obsession in this land. Nevertheless, the fact remains that where the marriage ceremony is more honoured in the breach than the observance—this is particularly the case in many parts of the interior—and where the children of unmarried mothers are increasingly numerous, there can never be a fair chance for either mother or child, until the law provides some effective means for securing to the woman either sufficient alimony from the father or a regular bounty from the State. And such a law, if and when it is made, will have to be administered and enforced by new men and new means, very different from those which now obtain in the "camp." Meanwhile, in official circles the subject is steeped in absent-minded silence, like that which overcomes profiteering patriots and the syndicated Press in England when some one talks of the sale of public honours and titles.

If I mention these little flies in the amber, it is not in any spirit of destructive criticism, but merely to prevent the uninitiated reader from assuming, as otherwise he might, that the Garden of Eden is being reconstructed, with modern improvements, in Uruguay, or anywhere else in South America. Take it all round, the Banda Oriental is probably governed with more educated intelligence than any country south of Panamá, and with just as much honesty; the stability of its finances and the maintenance of public order are certainly superior to those of her neighbours. It remains nevertheless true that party politics here are essentially the old sordid struggle of the Haves and the Have-nots, and that, *pace* the Monroe doctrine, the words and works of South America's republican politicians bear an unpleasant family likeness to those of party government men in monarchical Europe. It is because this is so, I think, that one objects to their assumption of superior virtue more than to any actual defects in their system of government, in the same way that one resents Mr. Wilson's doctrinaire claim to act as the universal umpire and exponent of International morality.

From the Press and from the placards on street hoardings it is safe to conclude that the industrial workers and Government employés of Montevideo take a lively interest in the progress of socialistic ideas. On the 1st of May, 1917, for example, the walls were covered with appeals to all good socialists to oppose the Government's proposals for compulsory military service. On another occasion, there was considerable excitement and a movement to secure official representations to Germany, with regard to the imprisonment of Liebknecht. But these activities are evidently stimulated by class bias and economic aims, rather than by any definite political consciousness. As

for polite society, it knows and cares very little about politics, local or foreign, for the simple reason that polite society, outside the family circle, consists entirely of women, at present unfitted by their education, and by the conventions which surround them on every side, to take any intelligent interest in public affairs.

For obvious reasons, which require no elaboration, one recognises and makes allowances for the peculiar conditions, racial and economic, which determine the humiliating social position of women, and explain the lack of civilised social intercourse between the two sexes, in most of the South American Republics, from Paraguay at the bottom of the scale, upwards. One makes allowance for the negro strain in Brazil and generally for the effect of climate and of interbreeding with aboriginal natives of higher or lower types. But it is not easy to reconcile Montevideo's outward and visible signs of material and cultural progress and the high physical and intellectual standard of the Uruguayan people, with the mediæval position assigned to, and apparently accepted by, their women. In this respect, "Oriental" civilisation is still inferior to that of the Argentine.

*Place aux dames;* they must have a chapter to themselves. But we shall have to be very, very careful.

# CHAPTER XI

## CHIEFLY ABOUT WOMAN

POLITE society in Montevideo—which, as I have said before, consists almost entirely of women—is quite willing to admit in private conversation that the conditions which govern the relations of the sexes in Uruguay are unsatisfactory and unwholesome, not to say mediæval. But they say it without conviction, and neither in the Press nor in the literature of the country will you discover anything to indicate that they resent, individually or collectively, the persistence of these conditions, or that they are really conscious of humiliation in remaining subject to the Moorish tradition of female virtue, defined by cast-iron conventions and confined behind iron-barred windows. They will tell you that things are slowly but surely changing, and that women enjoy far more liberty now than they did twenty-five years ago, but there is seldom any enthusiasm about these admissions. On the contrary, they are generally flavoured with a delicate melancholy, *laudator temporis acti*—and sometimes with the same gentle sort of deprecation with which one's grandmother used to speak of "votes for women," and the bold bad suffragettes. There is no such conservative as your "good" woman, and it is probably true that no other animal thrives so well in captivity. Nevertheless, remembering that educated women in South America frequently read books, and occasionally travel in Europe, one cannot but marvel at the nature and results of the barbed-wire conventions with which they are here sur-

rounded, and apparently well content. Also one wonders whether, in a society so outwardly cultured and disciplined as this, the male sex can really be such rampant profligates and sensualists as the maintenance of these conventions would imply. Personally, I do not believe it; for, to put the matter plainly, the basic convention upon which society proceeds in these countries, is that freedom of social intercourse between men and women must inevitably lead to promiscuous sexual intercourse. Again, I do not believe it. The male youth of Uruguay is certainly undisciplined, chiefly because he is spoiled by his women-folk, and because there is nothing in the curriculum of the secondary schools or universities to inculcate a code of honour and self-control; but there is nothing to show that a proper system of education, beginning on Boy Scout lines, would not give as good results here as in most European countries.[1] At all events the City Fathers of Montevideo have never thought it necessary to pass a law, such as that which runs in Buenos Aires (or that made by good Queen Wilhelmina for Holland), to protect women from being accosted by men in the streets during the daytime. The young women of Montevideo can certainly go about their shopping and social business unescorted and unmolested.

No, the more closely one examines the subject, the more reason is there to believe that the semi-Asiatic position of woman in the subtropical and temperate parts of South America is not necessitated either by racial or climatic conditions, but is simply the tyranny of social customs, fortified in their persistence by the Hispano-Moorish traditions of "the best families," and by the

[1] The Boy Scout movement in Montevideo, extremely active and promising in 1915–16, appears to have since dried up at the source. But for this the youth of Uruguay is not to blame.

influence of the Roman Catholic Church, a tyranny as petrified and ubiquitous as the Moorish tradition in architecture all over the continent. For observe, it is not only the unmarried girl who needs to be protected by the insuperable barriers which society has agreed to erect between the sexes: the married woman is just as rigorously cut off from reasonable social intercourse with men, except those of her immediate family circle—and so rigorous is the censorship created by the ostracisms and defamations of polite society for any breach of its conventional code, that age cannot wither nor custom stale the infinite variety of its uncharitable gossip. I remember an old lady, a grandmother and a sexagenarian, telling me that she could not offer me a seat in her motor-car after the opera because "people would talk." And I remember, as another typical instance of Montevidean manners, that the wife of a distinguished member of the diplomatic body had thoughtlessly accepted the offer of a lift home from a dinner-party from one of her husband's colleagues, when a horrified native lady intervened and begged her to save appearances by having another guest drive with them, *at least to the first corner. Ah, ces langues!* And the application of the code is not limited to the native born; the stranger within the gates of Uruguay is expected to conform to it. You may be English or French, society will pick up its sanctimonious skirts and consign you to outer darkness if you venture to act in all good faith upon the assumption that a man may be clean-minded and a woman virtuous. At the fashionable afternoon tea place in the Calle Rincon *para familias*, gentlemen unaccompanied by ladies are not admitted. *Ex pede Herculem.* English families in the Argentine and Uruguay, and especially those of the second generation of residents, usually conform to

these local shibboleths and make a virtue of necessity. I have even known more than one English parent of native-born children to defend the barrier system, maintaining that the sex passions of these people are not controllable without it, and that, the *coup de foudre* being a phenomenon of frequent occurrence, parents and husbands do well to guard against it. They therefore support a code which, while precluding rational social intercourse, professes to confer a measure of protection against the call of the blood. But the very fact of foreigners being expected to conform to the ancient Iberian formulæ and fashions of deportment is in itself evidence that the survival of the code is solely due to the tyranny of hidebound custom and that the remedy lies in decent education.

As things are, polite society in Uruguay resembles the congregations of the Lutheran Church; the ewe lambs and wethers carefully fenced off from the wild he-goats. Outside of the family circle, which therefore assumes enormous size and importance, the average man's social activities are confined to his club, to racing, or politics, or the theatre, and for the rest, to the cultivation of such wild oats as his needs, means and opportunities may allow. On the morganatic attachments of the married men, on the benevolent activities of imported French and Italian artistes, and of the "China" of the lesser *demi-monde*, society looks with something very like complacency.[1] The *ménage à trois* is not sanctioned by the Mussulman code, but the Pasha, when bored by his

[1] The term "China" (origin doubtful) is applied in the Argentine and the Banda Oriental to native-born women bred from Indian or half-Indian stock. They are generally of pleasant manners and good physique; in the matter of morals, unbiassed and somewhat miscellaneous; and in their disposition, simple, affectionate and philoprogenitive.

own *ménage*, may visit the secret orchards of his choice. In that circle of society where politicians and plutocrats meet, the maintenance of a mistress is almost *de rigueur*, as in Paris, if one would be in the fashion. Married men are not supposed to pay visits with their wives; and society does not usually indulge in such promiscuous entertainments as dinner-parties. There are dances, of course, for matrimonial ends, but mother's lamb remains very discreetly within range of mother's eye, and cosy corners, except for engaged couples, are unknown. In fact, the only legitimate capacities in which a member of the male sex can appear at a social function are those of a watch-dog or an aspirant to matrimony. Outside of the family circle, his relations with women in society are marked by rigid formality, and hedged about with the *chevaux de frise* of inviolable conventions.

I recall to mind a certain tea-party given by a much-travelled, and therefore liberal-minded, lady of the best "Oriental" society, at which, in addition to the usual large gathering of women, there were present no less than four men—to wit, three husbands and a brother.[1] It was an instructive entertainment, though from the European social standard a dull and uncomfortable business. After the tea, at which the ladies sat down to table, while the men stood around and passed cakes and polite remarks, the women retired in a body to the drawing-room, where they sat in a circle, talking chiffons,

[1] At inter-family dinners, or convivial gatherings of intimate friends, it is not considered good form to separate husband and wife at table. Host and hostess sit side by side, and the rest, two by two, round the festive board. These entertainments may not be wildly exciting, but they serve to stimulate the tribal instinct, a very powerful factor in Montevidean life, and they are eminently respectable. To achieve respectability is the be-all and end-all of existence.

babies and the servant problem, for the best part of an hour. During this time the men remained in another room, smoking and telling each other stories about the joys of life in Paris and about ladies of the undomesticated kind, *muy verde*. In search of knowledge I ventured into the drawing-room, and, greatly daring, engaged one of the ladies in conversation—one who had spent several seasons in Paris and likely, therefore, to concede that a travelling stranger might speak to a lady without wishing either to marry or to compromise her. I asked her if she could, and would, explain to me why all the very pleasant gentlemen in the other room remained so unsociably distant? Why, also, was it that according to the laws and customs of Montevideo, a woman might not be seen walking and talking in public with any male friend or acquaintance, no matter how notoriously respectable? "Señor," she replied, "you are quite right; it is all very stupid. But when men talk to women in this country, it is always about the same thing, and it is not suitable conversation for the drawing-room." While there is good ground, no doubt for this young woman's indictment, I see no reason to believe that there is more original sin in a well-bred native of Uruguay than, shall we say, in a Spaniard or a Russian. And, after all, whose fault is it if the average male product of Uruguayan education disports himself like the oiled and curled Assyrian bull, and regards *la chasse aux femmes* as the chief purpose of existence? Does not the barbed-wire system and all this artificial separation of the sexes inevitably tend to produce in both a permanent and unhealthy condition of sexual excitement? Beyond all question, it does; the whole life of the community throbs with the pulsations of natural human instincts, all the stronger for being arti-

ficially restrained, and society thus becomes a network of intrigue, of secret rebellions against its Draconian laws. There can be no doubt, as was proved long ago by the ancient civilisation of Greece, and more recently during the golden age in Japan, that the healthy, natural treatment of natural things provides the best safeguard against morbid sexual excitement and all its unpleasant consequences. Under the South American system, and particularly in the more highly civilised Republics, one sees this sexual excitement at its worst reflected in private life, in literature, and on the stage, in manners and in morals, because here you have the traditions of the Moorish harem struggling with the instinctive aspirations of the Latin towards freedom.

The artificial state of society, produced by the tyranny of creeds and customs long outworn, is undeniable; one of its inevitable and immediate consequences is to make the outward appearances of propriety the be-all and end-all of social virtue. On the moral and physical disadvantages resulting therefrom, especially for women, I prefer to make no comment. Amongst the lower classes they are sufficiently obvious; incest of all kinds is notoriously common. As regards the middle class, the position of affairs has recently been described with brutal frankness by a Montevidean writer, in a novel entitled *La Familia Gutierrez.* No stronger indictment could be penned of the arbitrary code of deportment imposed upon young women during the period in which they are expected to win and retain the affections of a suitor, *pour le bon motif.*

It is a feature of the damnable system, and one which tends to intensify the prevailing atmosphere of sexual excitement, that whereas polite society, armed with all the terrors of the Holy Inquisition, places woman on a

pedestal of virtuous inaccessibility, it allows and encourages her to make herself as attractive as possible to the other sex. To see a mother and her marriageable daughter taking the air at Pocitos, or shopping on Sarandi at the fashionable hour, is to learn something of the gentle art of serving forbidden fruit in the most alluring style. Mother's whole heart is set, no doubt, on protecting her poor child from the crafts and assaults of the ravening male, but they both take good care that everything possible shall be done to attract his roving eye. The young lady's clothes, especially in summer, leave but little of her figure to the imagination, and I gather that in the arts of seductive fascination she has not much to learn. Of course, Mother's defence, on a charge of illogical procedure, would be that competition in the marriage market is extremely brisk, and that it is the business of every good woman to find husbands for her daughters at all costs. But even granting this debatable point, if there be any sincerity in this arbitrary segregation of women, or anything in it of vital necessity to the preservation of society, one might at least expect that, having married, women should protect themselves effectively from all further attentions of the ravening male by a mouse-like modesty of raiment and by discarding all her feminine wiles of allurement. Knowing the sensitive jealousy of her lawful lord and the polygamous instincts of his friends, one might reasonably expect her to follow the logical example of her fellow-women of the Far East and either blacken her teeth with betel-nut, or adopt some similar device for escaping the glad eye. She might cut her eyelashes, give up the rouge-pot, and eschew the flapper style in skirts. But *noblesse oblige*; she evidently prefers to run her risks.

The present state of affairs, conceived in the mind

of mediæval Spain, is only maintained because of the defective education, and the inherent conservatism of South American women. It is simply a matter of slavish adherence to fetishes, combined with a morbid fear of public opinion, in a community greatly addicted to malicious gossip. That it is dictated by tyrannous custom, and not by any creed, is sufficiently proved by the fact that, when Argentinos and Orientals find themselves in London or Paris they behave like ordinary civilised people, and the heavens do not fall.

You perceive this same tyranny of an artificial respectability in polite society's observance of its intolerable code of mourning. In this matter, the Draconian severity of the older generation has been somewhat modified of late, but the unwritten ordinances of Montevideo's respectability are still sufficient to fill the streets with the garments and trappings of conventional grief and to take half the joy out of life for every one. Not so long ago, society expected that the death of a parent should be mourned for three years, and mourning meant not only weeds and flowing crape, but complete isolation, close confinement in the house of woe. Women in such case were expected never to be seen abroad except to go to Mass, and amongst the unco guid it was bad form to go to Mass at midday—they crept there before breakfast. For an uncle, aunt, brother or sister, the code imposed a year's abstinence from the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. So that in the case of large families it frequently happened—and it happens still—that the younger generation spent all its best years beneath the weeping-willow tree, marooned in the odour of sanctity, cut off from all rational enjoyment of life. (Is it not told of an ingenious iconoclast of Paraguay that he invited all his relations to his wedding and burnt the

house down in order, as he said, to have all his mourning at once, and be done with it?) The unwritten law enforced with inquisitorial malignity in a community where every one is afraid of his neighbour's definitions of *les convenances* imposes mourning even for the lesser degrees of kinship, so that to be on the safe side an Uruguayan family rushes into black on the slightest provocation. (The line of safety appears to be drawn with, but after, the cook's parrot.) No doubt the Church, for its own ends, had something to do with the devising of this lugubrious business, and the patriarchal social system would naturally tend to perpetuate it, but with the last decade ideas have become less parochial, and it is gradually losing some of its barbarous rigidity.

There seems to be good reason to hope that the sack-cloth and ashes business is in process of suppression, but as matters stand in this year of grace, it is no exaggeration to say that half the well-to-do class goes clad in funereal black. For man, *passe encore*—he may wear decent mourning without necessarily reminding one of the undertaker—but that women, whose proper business it should be to gladden the eye and rejoice the heart, should thus convert themselves into walking monuments of Old Mortality, this is an offence against reason and a reproach to the cheerful blue of heaven.

Beyond all doubt it is the slavish conservatism of women, and not the wicked will of man, which imposes these senseless fetishes upon the community; for here, more so than with us, woman is the maker, controller and permanent inmate of the home. Only conservatism of the atavistic unreasoning kind can account for their persistence in adhering as they do to the Moorish style of architecture, with its prison-like windowless walls, the single entrance to its caravanserai patio, and the

sala on the street front, with its balconies and the little slits of peep-holes in the shutters, that are for ever shut. Apart from its obvious suitability to the seraglio system, and its consequent impropriety in a modern civilised state, it is a style of building entirely unsuited to a climate which, for several months in the year, is decidedly cold. The cheerless discomfort of a typical Uruguayan establishment in winter is one of many sacrifices which these people unconsciously pay to the Moorish tradition; but the lady of the house, as she sits shivering over a smelly kerosene stove, seems, like its builder, to cherish the delusion that winter is an accident which will probably not occur again.

It is this same good old tawny conservatism, no doubt, which leads her to defend and perpetuate for her offspring the semi-barbarous conditions which govern the relations of the sexes, and the egregious rights of courtship and betrothal requisite and necessary for maidens within the pale of *El Mundo Uruguayo*.

After dark, in all the less-frequented *calles* of Montevideo's middle-class suburbia, Carmen and Juana, Benita and Dolores stand nightly at their dim casements, either exchanging sweet nothings with a shadowy young man on the sidewalk, or leaning over the balcony patiently awaiting destiny in the form of a "Dragon." I never see them at this stage of love's young dream but that my mind, riding its hobby-horse of comparative sociology, conjures up irrelevant and irreverent memories of mating marts in other lands—notably those of the ancient East. The unclaimed wares are so frankly, sometimes so pathetically, eloquent of window-dressing. And then *La Familia Gutierrez* comes to mind, with its surgical analysis of the life of these young women, these children in their teens, for whom all thoughts, all passions, all delights,

A MODEL ESTANCIA: HORSES AT PASTURE, "CANTA FIERO"

A MODEL ESTANCIA: A RIVERSIDE POTRERO, "CANTA FIERO"

[*To face p.* 212.

are fiercely concentrated in the winning and holding of a *novio*, for whom the fear of spinsterhood is an abiding shadow of shame, and philoprogenitiveness the strongest of all instincts.

The normal love-affair, especially in the middle class, begins when a roving eye, on the sidewalk, meets the glad eye, unblushingly expectant, at the *sala* window; sometimes the glad eye has been tracked to its lair by the bold *poursuivant*, as the result of signs of gladness at the cathedral parade or in the crowd on Sarandi. For a day or two the young man expresses his admiration and good intentions by hanging about in the vicinity of the señorita's house and by following her at a respectful distance in her walks abroad. Eventually, if the young woman does not dislike his appearance, she appears casually on the balcony and becomes aware of Romeo sighing and making sheep's eyes from over the way; and the performance begins. If, after the preliminary conversational skirmishes, both parties desire each other's better acquaintance, the young man's novitiate on the sidewalk begins, and he is known as the fair one's "Dragon." The term is roughly equivalent to our "walking out" or "keeping company." It is, however, non-committal and probationary; except with the tail of a watchful eye, the family does not recognise the Dragon's proceedings, while the cold barrier of the balcony railing stands between him and rapturous wooing. The Dragon stage may continue over a considerable period, should the young man waver between love and liberty; from personal observation I venture to assert that the Dragon period of probation is probably the only time of a South American man's life during which the superiority of the masterful male yields to symptoms of deferential courtesy. When he takes the final plunge of being introduced

to the girl's parents and paying his formal respects to the family, he becomes, if accepted, her *novio*, or fiancé. His matrimonial goose is then cooked. Society expects that his intimate relationship and proprietary rights, tempered though they be by maternal vigilance, shall end in marriage—it is significant that when he becomes a bridegroom he is still called a *novio*. Public opinion is very severe on faithless swains who back out of the formal engagement; and rightly so, for the girl who is jilted by her *novio* is not likely to get another. Her virgin bloom is gone, and her gentle sisters speak of her with the sympathy due to one who is neither a widow nor a *divorcée*. From the woman's point of view, this is the worst feature of the system, for engagements frequently last for years, and the atmosphere of sexual excitement in which these youths and maidens are brought up is unhealthy. A girl who has been engaged for a year or two is compelled to keep her *novio* at all costs, a condition of affairs scarcely conducive to self-respect. And when she has achieved her ambition of marriage the Uruguayan woman is generally very little better than a head servant in her own house; even in the richest families, she frequently has no money or regular allowance of her own. She is content to be the mother of an unlimited number of children and to consult her husband's pleasure in all things; to live in economic dependence and intellectual inferiority; to be grateful for small mercies, and to look the other way when her lord thinks fit to stray in paths of dalliance.

But they hug their chains, these women. Every one of them would rather be Lothario's married drudge than perish on the virgin thorn and die in single blessedness. They will tell you that woman's highest aspiration, her only rôle in life, is to bear children and keep house; and

they seem to resent the idea that she should ever do, or be, anything more. This, their normal state of mind, is pathetically reflected in the conversation of the average "Oriental" drawing-room—there are exceptions, heaven be praised!—and in the attitude of hostility which Uruguayan society (with a big S) displays towards those women who display any tendency to call their souls their own, and to disregard the least of all their shibboleths.

If this were Costa Rica, or even Southern Mexico, one would bow to the inevitable; but these women belong physically and intellectually to the higher type of civilised humanity. If their minds are undeveloped, it is not because the soil is unfertile, but simply for lack of proper education; from their ordinary conversation you might infer that they had passed straightway from the kindergarten, by way of the market-place, to the seclusion of the seraglio. Marriage and giving in marriage; the breeding and feeding of babies; the delinquencies of husbands and the dreadful doings of the *demi-monde;* the buying and making of clothes; the servant problem; and the latest thing in spicy scandals—with these things do the señoras entertain each other unceasingly at their "five o'clocks." Their manners are graceful and pleasant, and they have usually been taught something of music and what Victorians called polite accomplishments, but of art, literature, politics, even of history and geography they generally know nothing. I recall to mind, as a typical instance of Uruguay's female education, the remark made by a leader of Montevideo society to a distinguished member of the diplomatic body, who had given a lecture on the subject of Marie Antoinette: "Ah," she said, "I did enjoy it so much—but I hoped all the time, you know, that the poor dear Queen was

going to escape." And one of the worst features of the deplorable limitation of their education is that, confined chiefly to the society of their own kith and kin, and lacking a healthy interest in political, social and intellectual activities of the world at large, they naturally develop an abnormal appetite for petty gossip of a rather spiteful kind. I really believe that there is more speculative philosophy and more breadth of views in the conversation of the peons' quarters out in the "camp" than at most gatherings of the beauty and fashion of Montevideo's bourgeoisie.

They dress well, here as in Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile. Yet a mere man may perhaps be permitted to express the opinion that the use of extremely high heels, combined with short skirts, is not to be commended where trim ankles and neat calves are strangely few and far between.

For the rest, they eat well, sleep well, dress well, and look well; grow stout at the appointed season and spoil their children unmercifully. But they have this satisfaction to their credit, though perhaps they do not realise it, that when they appear in public in the company of their male belongings—be it husband, father or brother—these masterful creatures, compared with them, look like poor and untidy relations. You notice the same thing in New York and Chicago, but here the contrast is even more markedly noticeable throughout all grades of society.

## CHAPTER XII

### MONTEVIDEO

ONE of the results of the prevailing Moorish tradition in architecture, with its one-storey houses all built around their little *patios*, is to spread the city out over an area enormous in proportion to the number of its inhabitants. Looking at its depth and distances from the mole-hill eminence of the Cerro (which is the name of the " Monte " that the Spanish navigators video'd), you would put its population at three or four times the actual number, just as one does when seeing the great enclosure of Peking from the city walls, or Constantinople from the forum of Theodosius, and for the same reason. The *patio* habit requires a lot of room, but experiments in the two- or three-storied house with a common central court are unsatisfactory as regards privacy, and evidently unpopular; while from the " Dragon's " point of view there are obvious objections to courtship from the sidewalk with a lady on a third-floor balcony, even though there be a complete Morse code with fan and handkerchief. Therefore, the one-storey house is likely to remain a national institution for some time to come, and the great cities of South America in the future will be extensive affairs. Montevideo, they say, has about 350,000 inhabitants—nobody seems quite sure of the figure—but you can ride for hours through its suburbs, each exactly like all the others, and all well served with two tramways. Only here and there, on the Artigas boulevard and in certain fashionable districts where plutocrats have built themselves

the latest thing in modern mansions and gardens, will you find social departures from the orthodox suburban *calle*, with its rows of plane trees, all of the same height, and its unending succession of houses with their *sala* windows all eternally shuttered, and their balconies all in a row about the height of a man's head. A street of this kind is no more monotonous, in reality, and is in many ways better, than a street in the suburbs of London or New York; but the point is that, whereas Twickenham speaks with one note and Hampstead with another, both differing from Tooting Bec, here in Montevideo when you have seen one street you have practically seen them all. This absence of invidious distinctions is evidence, no doubt, of a satisfactorily democratic division of wealth, as far as the middle class is concerned. There is very little here of the ostentatious plutocratic element which flaunts itself in Buenos Aires, and on the other hand, while the great unwashed is well represented, there are few paupers and no foul slums.

No matter where one goes in South America, one had the feeling that its democracies have become very restless of late years because they realise that their New World is not necessarily safe, in spite of having abolished crowns, thrones and sceptres. Buenos Aires, for instance, has become more intolerant of plutocrats and *capitalistas* than Barcelona itself. Catalan agitators, bursting with the gospel of Trotsky and Lenin, are busy wherever industrial activity has produced conspicuous divisions between the Haves and Have-nots. But the problem is complicated here by the fact that where every one considers himself to be middle class at least, there is no bloated bourgeoisie—to go for—only the foreign capitalist, the banker and the manufacturer. The restlessness is there, widespread, manifest, also the desire of the manual labourer

to work only on his own terms; but its manifestations are indiscriminate, and, if Buenos Aires strike leadership is to be taken as typical, conceived in ignorance and conducted in foolishness. When one sees the leading Republic of the South American continent rivalling young China in the folly of its misconceptions of liberty—even strikes of school-children being seriously discussed by the authorities—one perceives that ample resources and elbow-room are not in themselves sufficient to make a contented people. One perceives also that those who would govern Demos wisely and well must be leaders, not followers, of public opinion; thinkers as well as talkers; and, when it comes to dealing with collective folly, men of action. The difference between Demos in Buenos Aires and Demos in Montevideo is racially small—though the former is outwardly more cosmopolitan—so that their very different conceptions of law and order and the good of the commonwealth may fairly be ascribed to the fact that Señor Battlé and his party have shown more sense and more courage in dealing with the anarchist element than Papa Irigoyen of Buenos Aires. Montevideo, at all events, gives one the impression of being too sensible, and possibly too comfortable, to allow the Syndicalist and the Communist to make life unbearable with all the stinks of their political laboratory. The social reformer is a conspicuous figure in the land, and (unless he happens to combine the rôle with that of a politician) usually honest and sincere; but sooner or later he comes up against the great Twin Soporifics, *Mañana* and *Mas ó Menos*, and they lull him to acquiescence, or to sleep. And so, in spite of all the alarms and excursions on her borders, and the fiery eloquence within them, Montevideo contrives to preserve a temperate and sensible state of society.

The family-party spirit of the thing, with *mañana* and

*mas ó menos* as tutelary spirits in the background, is fairly manifested in Uruguay's public services. The army, which seems, in spite of all principles of equality, to be largely recruited from the coloured element ot the population, is certainly not a militarist force, though useful for the executive's purposes of law and order, and for the discouraging of revolutions. The police, as a body, inspire sympathy rather than awe; they give one the impression of having been recently discharged from an infirmary. They are certainly the smallest and feeblest set of bobbies in existence. It is a phenomenon capable of being interpreted in several ways, but local experts are probably correct in their assertion that the selection of men for the force is made on the principle that a small and infirm policeman costs less than a large one. Anyhow, they look as dignified as possible with their white batons and white spats, and their courtesy is worthy of Old Castile. It is of the kindly, thoughtful brand which, rather than turn you empty away, will give you the wrong number of a tram without the slightest hesitation.

The tramway service, being absolutely essential to the business and pleasure of the people, as distinct from that of the *capitalista*, is wonderfully good and cheap. Indeed, it is so good and so efficiently handled that one asks oneself what can be the reason for the incredible rottenness of the railway, telegraph, telephone and postal services? Are these of so little importance to the majority of the community that the bureaucracy can afford to let them go to pieces? They have two telephone companies competing for public disfavour in Montevideo, the idea presumably being that when the Señorita tells you the line is *muerta* on one, you may hope to extract signs of life from the other.

As for the railway, making all due allowances for the

war's curtailment of its coal supply, words fail to describe its *dolce far niente* methods of handling passengers and freight—especially freight. It reminds one of the line built by the Chinese from Peking to Kalgan, alongside of which, by stony mountain tracts, most of the country's traffic is carried on by mules and camels, as being cheaper and more reliable. If Uruguay possessed roads capable of carrying heavy motor traffic, the "Central Uruguay" would either have to get on or get out; as things are, it continues to inculcate forty-parson patience in a community already far too disposed to the cultivation of that virtue.

Personally, having passed most of my days amongst *bona fide* Orientals and learned something of the wisdom of their contemplative philosophy, I have a sneaking sympathy for a people which sincerely believes that it doesn't really matter whether you do a thing, or hear of a thing, to-day or to-morrow. Therefore, out in the "camp," amongst peons who hold this faith in the unity of spirit, I find myself acquiescing in the state of mind which is quite satisfied to receive its letters and telegrams once a week (if the state of the roads permit) by sending a messenger to fetch them from the *pulperia* where the Government's "diligence" is supposed to drop them.[1] Out yonder, where the peace of God has time to brood, I shrug my shoulders at transport and communication arrangements that would be severely criticised even by the Chinese; but here, in the city, where the light of heaven is dimmed by clustering cobwebs of electric wires, and Chambers of Commerce talk loudly of their enterprise, I

[1] The rural postmaster or mistress, generally located at a *pulperia*, receives, as a rule, no salary, but is supposed to get a percentage on the sale of stamps. But as they seldom have stamps to sell, except in the larger towns, their interest in postal business is not absorbing.

confess to being vexed with a system which transmits telegrams at about normal letter speed, and doesn't seem to mind whether the outlying parts of the country get its mails this week or next.

From 12 noon to 1.30 p.m. Montevideo takes its midday meal and siesta. All the shops are shut, and the clamour of the lottery ticket and newspaper sellers [1] dies away upon the noontide, for the law ordains that every man is to have an hour and a half (or more) for his lunch.

It is interesting to observe how this forty-eight-hours-a-week law works out, both in the breach and the observance; significant here, as elsewhere, the politician's concern for the comfort and ease of organised city labour, as contrasted with his willingness to allow agricultural workers to toil from dawn to dusk. One wonders what would become of this country—and others—if the husbandman and the sailor were to insist on their right never to work more than four hours at a stretch? In practice, of course, the thing works itself out into reasonable compromises, except where Government and public servants are concerned; amongst these no self-respecting postal clerk or tram conductor but must seek repose after four hours of toil, come what may. The result in many cases means a frightful waste of the public's time and money, but what of that? When, for example, the crew of the ferry which runs between the harbour and the Cerro has completed a four-

[1] The number of newspapers published, and apparently absorbed, by Montevideo is mysteriously great. Of the dozen or so represented at all hours of the day by swarms of shouting boys, three or four are commonly reported to be self-supporting, even remunerative, enterprises, though their price remains as before the war, two cents. For the rest, the various political parties and the Church are said to be financially responsible. If so, their object must be to provide harmless employment for poor journalists; for either as polemics or propaganda these sheets must be a shocking waste of money.

hours shift, they may not stay aboard the boat, for that would count as work. So they make the boat fast to the wharf at the Cerro and stroll about on shore for an hour, to the satisfaction of Satan. It would really seem as if, in this complicated world, it is impossible to make any one set of people comfortable without disturbing hosts of others; and our sagacious rulers, having discovered this truth, prefer to sacrifice the comfort of the minority who work with their heads to the satisfaction of those who toil with their hands.

Montevideo boasts of few sights, in the tourist sense of the word; no historical monuments or mouldy collections of relics, and nothing to compare with Buenos Aires in the matter of architecture. Nevertheless, it is more interesting and instructive, to my mind, than either Buenos Aires or Rio. For here you come nearer to the heart of things, nearer to perception of the forces at work on the continent; because of the country's smallness and social aloofness, you perceive more clearly the great problems on which all its future depends; the economic servitude of the Old World to the New; the rapid filling up of the earth's last vacant fertile spaces; the infiltration from Europe of the corrosive gospel of discontent; the storming of the last stronghold of the Catholic faith, planted here by the stout Jesuits three centuries ago.

Walking at evening through these quiet streets and pleasant places, I find myself wishing that this land at least might be spared the painful process of further civilisation; that it might rigorously exclude the alien and continue, untouched and untroubled by the senseless bustle and bloodshed beyond its borders, the pleasant pastoral life of the "Purple Land." I find myself, in fact, sympathising with President Irigoyen who, it seems, would now fain rid Argentina of all capitalists and foreigners

and exhort his people, abjuring commerce, to dwell henceforth in Arcadian simplicity, consuming each the kindly fruits of his own rustic labour. In all truth, I like not to think of what the state of the Pampas is likely to be, say fifty years hence, when the last of the Gauchos has disappeared before the invading hosts of base mechanics and all the land has been parcelled out in small holdings to the flotsam and jetsam of famine-haunted Europe.

Though there be little for a tourist's guide to show you, there is plenty of food for thought in the highways and by-ways of the city. Begin, for instance, as a devout Britisher, by contemplating the lamentable spectacle presented by the scurvy premises where hangs the escutcheon of His Majesty's Legation and Consulate. One of the quietest and prettiest of Montevideo's plazas lies over against this sorry monument of Foreign Office—or is it Treasury?—parsimony. You may sit here, in the shade of the giant palms, and reflect at leisure on the miraculous fact that the Empire has hitherto survived the crass bungling of its bureaucrats. It is, indeed, an extraordinary thing that in those countries where the most rudimentary common sense should indicate the necessity for keeping up a dignified appearance, you will find Great Britain's representatives tucked away in mean back streets, lodged with far less distinction than their colleagues of China or Peru. Like the Consulate General at Rio, our local habitation here bears eloquent testimony to the penny wise, pound foolish, policy, which has apparently survived the monstrous waste of the past five years; both serve to impress modesty upon the gentlemen who serve therein, by reminding them that, for the Foreign Office, South America has always been, so to speak, a kind of dustbin. Sitting in this peaceful Plaza, one wonders whether the war and its economic results may perchance disturb the com-

placency of this tradition, whether new light will ever percolate into the innermost fastnesses of Downing Street? If so, it should not be long before steps are taken to have Great Britain represented on this continent in such a manner as to indicate our perception of its coming rôle in world politics. In matters of this kind, essentially matters of discrimination and tactful intuition, our French friends never make the mistake of attempting to combine official dignity with shirt-sleeve simplicity in a back street.

If you would seek another subject for profitable meditation, take the road that runs northwards by the sea and visit the Campo Santo. There, between high walls, in narrow cypress-shrouded ways, bedecked with artificial flowers, 'neath monumental stones and effigies, Montevideo-that-was rests from its labour, and Montevideo-that-is comes here, with almost Oriental piety, to remember and reverence its dead.[1]

It is said that the last thing which a self-respecting family will part with, when in financial need, is its burial vault in this honoured site, though the competition of the *nouveaux riches* for admission to the society of the well-born and well-dead is very keen. The keynote of these effigies and epitaphs is undoubtedly domestic and filial affection, very simple and sincere; some of the art which attempts to express it is curiously artless and primitive, reminding one of the home-made obituary verses which one sees

[1] The oldest monuments and memorial tablets in this cemetery date back no further than the beginning of the nineteenth century, and nobody seems to know (or care) what has become of the monuments—there must have been some—of their ancestors of the eighteenth. All Montevideo's history seems to date from the year 1808; as far as outward and visible signs are concerned, Colonial Spain and the Conquistadores might never have set foot in the Banda Oriental. The Cathedral boasts but one monument, viz. that of an archbishop of the nineteenth century.

published with the announcement of bereavements in Scotch and Irish provincial papers. Sometimes these monuments are pompous and vulgar; here and there you will find the pitiful solecism of a framed photograph of the deceased, generally in his dress suit, horribly conflicting with one's conceptions of decent immortality; but on the whole, the atmosphere of this city of the dead is restful, dignified, and of good hope, and there is evidence at every step that the departed are held in kindly remembrance by the living. And further northwards, looking out to sea, beyond Pocitos, lies the British cemetery, a very beautiful burial-ground.

The Cerro—Montevideo's landmark from the sea—should be the city's finest public park and recreation place, but the fashionable world has moved in the other direction, towards Pocitos and Carrasco, and the little hill, with its old Spanish fort and lighthouse, is a melancholy spot. Its approaches and vicinity are squalid in the extreme; squatters' huts, corrugated iron shanties, broken-down fences, rubbish heaps and wandering goats, all remind one of the outskirts of some unkempt new town of the woolly west in Canada or the United States. But for me, as I sat on a wall of the fort and viewed the landscape o'er, the melancholy destiny of the spot was emphasised, not so much by its unattractive appearance as by consciousness of the immediate vicinity of the *saladero*, that hideous place of slaughter where, all day long and every day, great herds of doomed beasts stand on the bleak hillside, with mounted men that stand guard over them, awaiting their turn to walk the narrow inclined way, that leads to the upper floor of the building, a sledge-hammer, and swift death. I never see the " Monte " now without thinking of those poor patient beasts, as I saw them one rainy day in August 1916, all huddled up, mournfully

lowing, in that grim vestibule of the canning factory. There had been a slackening of the sledge-hammer—shortage of freight, or something—during the past week, and so it happened that several troops of cattle had waited here for more than a day, unwatered and unfed. One longed to speed up the machinery, to hasten the progress of that sad procession. The Irishman who showed us over the factory, where the suspended carcases circulate between cutters and flayers from the killing-pen to the freezing-room, told us that all this meat was going to France for the troops. Say what you will, there is something wrong with a system of creation which compels intelligent human beings to supply themselves with energy, wherewith to slay their fellowmen, by killing and eating the beasts of the field. The system is probably tentative and provisional only, but there is no denying in the meanwhile, that this planet would have been made a far pleasanter place of residence for man and beast had these things been arranged differently. I confess a sympathy with the Buddhists' attitude in this matter. It offers no solution as to the disposal of swiftly multiplying animal life, but as a humane creed I prefer it to "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

The worthy couple who devised and made the zoological garden and raree-show at the Villa Dolores (lately bequeathed to the city) must have been original characters, possessed of a very lively sympathy for animals and children. Their ideas on the subject of architecture, art, and landscape gardening, as here displayed, are hardly calculated to teach the young idea how to shoot, but seldom have I seen birds and beasts display such evidence of health and cheerful resignation under captivity. And then, the animals' cemetery, all set about with roses, each little grave with its appropriate monument. This, and the

fearful and wonderful collection of waxworks and mechanical toys, and the sleek glossiness of the birds and beasts, proclaim the simple virtues of the departed. The whole place is interesting as the work of rugged, kindly, uneducated minds, carrying out their own whimsical ideas, regardless of cost and quite indifferent to public opinion. It is a peculiarly complex benevolence which condemns a couple of polar bears to pass their lives in a subtropical garden, and adorns their cage with an inscription begging the public to be kind to animals.

Close to the Villa Dolores lies the fashionable bathing beach of Pocitos. To reach it you pass through a well-to-do suburban district which, with the eye of faith, you can see in years to come growing to the opulence and splendour of Palermo, rivalling the seats of the mighty cattle kings of Argentina. But for the present, generally speaking, there is an unfinished, transient look about these environs, a curious admixture of prosperous bourgeois comfort and shirt-sleeve *sans-gêne*, often reminiscent of the back lots of Canadian towns or the *datchas* of Southern Russia. The public gardens and the sea-front promenade, which runs from Pocitos to the Parque Urbano, are all very modern and imposing, but cheek by jowl with the ornate *quintas* of the rich you find ragged little fenced-in lots with tin-pot shanties, homes of the popcorn vendors and the humble washerwoman. The owner of a Rolls-Royce car marches with the plebeian proprietor of an alfresco skittle alley. It is all very cheerfully democratic, no doubt, but the scenic effects are disappointing.[1]

At the Parque Hotel, or Casino Municipal, the nimble

[1] One sees the same democratic *sans-gêne* in the heart of the city—private mansions and Government offices sandwiched in between the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, for example, in the Calle Rincon has a druggist and a draper on its borders.

ball rolls round the roulette wheel every afternoon and evening for the benefit of a Government which is nothing if not moral and benevolent. Here in the summer months (October to April) society foregathers to disport itself—mothers with daughters to marry, mothers with children to bathe, *estancieros* with money to burn—and the State Hotel does them very well indeed at $8 gold per diem. The cuisine is up to the best Ritz-Carlton standard, and the service unusually good. As at Monte Carlo, the canny visitor who does not gamble gets many benefits at the punter's expense. So does the hotel staff; and it shows no signs of following the path of Bolshevism, which has made the hotels of Buenos Aires uncomfortable places of wrath. A waiter at the Parque draws $50 a month (£12 at 1919 exchange) with everything found and tips on a liberal scale; he is therefore better off than a British captain on retired pay, and seems to have grasped the fact that he has not much to gain by listening to the greasy Poles and ranting Catalans who come over from the Argentine to proclaim the doom of the bloated bourgeois. The Casino staff have got a soft thing, and they know it. Therefore the travelling Argentino finds here a pleasant haven of refuge from the slings and arrows of his Republic's outrageous socialism, a spot where efficient service and civility are not considered to be beneath the dignity of waiters, porters and housemaids. All the same, even here the traveller is gently reminded of the simple dignity of South American independence, for if he wants his boots blacked he must go into the city and spend ten minutes, *coram populo*, on the perch of the *lustrador*. Also, if he wants his clothes pressed, they must go to a *planchador*, who holds by right prescriptive the lucrative monopoly of that business.

Music and the drama flourish in Montevideo, particularly music. It is not only that the people are naturally musical:

the theatre affords much-needed relief from the monotony of their unsocial state, besides providing the fashionable world with an opportunity for a competitive display. To be in the smart set, one must be a subscriber for the opera season at all costs: families afflicted with social ambition will stint themselves for the rest of the year, may even go hungry and pawn their valuables, to be seen of men in a box or the stalls of the "Solis" during August, when the stars of the operatic firmament shine here for a while, on their way back from Buenos Aires to New York. As no really self-respecting woman can be seen in the same gown twice at the opera, and as a stall costs $12, and a box $80, the struggle for social distinction becomes an expensive business. The prices paid for seats at the opera are higher in Montevideo than anywhere in the world, but the performances are usually inferior to those given in Buenos Aires. The stars are of the first magnitude, but the ballet and chorus are greatly reduced, for the troupe which plays in the Argentine capital from May to July generally divides itself on its way back to New York, part going to Montevideo and the rest to Santiago de Chile. Also, after their heavy work in Buenos Aires, the touring singers are inclined to be stale and a trifle careless, and as the gods of Uruguay are nothing if not frankly critical, and expect value for their money, differences have been known to arise between the stage and the gallery. The great Caruso himself was painfully surprised on one occasion—a performance of *Manon* in 1916—when his singing was greeted with derisive whistlings.

The standard of music and drama provided by other travelling companies, chiefly Italian and Spanish, in South America is surprisingly low; it is certainly dear at the price of a stall—$1.50. The Italian opera companies are often so shockingly bad that the stoic endurance of the audience

becomes a mystery. One marvels that the inferior quality of the majority of imported artists should not have stimulated home production on a larger scale, especially as some " Oriental " play-writers and artists have shown no little talent and achieved considerable success. Generally speaking, however, the taste of the theatre-going public here, as in England, is demoralised by the pernicious activities of the modern commercial impresario. The legitimate drama has become caviare to the general public because Demos has so long been fed on legs and laughter that he has no stomach for a more wholesome diet. " El estado debe vigilar por la salud publica," sagely observes the Government's match-box moralist; a little vigilance exercised by the State over the appalling slush served out to the public by music-halls and picture-palaces would be more convincing than all the eloquence of politicians about progress, liberty and justice.

At the best theatres in Montevideo—the " Solis " and the " Uriquiza "—the unwritten law which requires the separation of the sexes is observed by the provision of a gallery for women only, known as the Casuela, or saucepan. The men's gallery is called El Paraiso—Paradise—possibly on account of the infernal noises which proceed from it. Above the women are the gods, all male. The appearances of virtue are thus preserved; but the absurd result of this arrangement is that unless a man can afford the more expensive seats, he cannot see a play in company with his women-folk. The same shibboleth of respectability precludes decent women from being seen at the evening performances of the music-halls; here the male audience, for some inscrutable reason, keeps its hat on, while the boxes are graced by the presence of the *demi-monde.* Most of the entertainers are French, either of the elderly forlorn hope or the youthful try-it-on-the-dog kind, and

their performances make one wonder why this paternal and progressive Government does not impose a high tariff on these imported articles for the protection of native taste and talent. Poor things, it is little enough they get for tickling the palate of the noisy casino audience; the price of a stall is two shillings.

But for the masses, and, indeed, for a good many of the classes, the legitimate drama has been ousted by the "movies." The number of picture-palaces in Montevideo and Buenos Aires and Rio is simply amazing; every vacant hoarding is dedaubed with the unsightly advertisements of their distorted horrors, their tales of blood and thunder, and their awful angel child. I have an idea, indeed, I hope, that a good many "society" young ladies frequent these fearful entertainments not because they like them, but because they provide young Strephon with opportunities for toying with Amaryllis in the shade—not to say the darkness—under her chaperon's very nose. I know that in many of these popular resorts the management rings a warning bell when it is going to turn the lights up. Now, if all the audience were breathlessly following the horrible history of the poor white slave, or the contortions of Charlie Chaplin, that bell would be superfluous, wouldn't it? Somehow, I cannot bring myself to believe that the picture-palace attracts only by its pictures; but if it does, what on earth is the good of all our talk about uplift, the progress of humanity, and the *culto del niño?* I prefer to believe that people go to these places just as they go to museums, either for purposes of flirtation, or for shelter from wind and rain.

Speaking of rain, your average Oriental seems to regard it much as he, or she, does cold weather, as an uncomfortable sort of accident, probably the result of thoughtlessness somewhere and not likely to occur again. There are

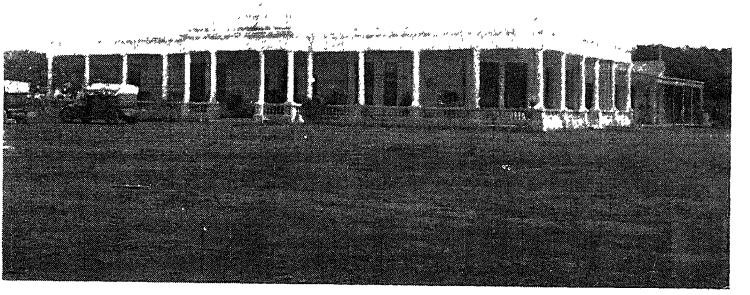
shops in Montevideo that display umbrellas and waterproofs—Burberrys themselves have an agency—but this seems to be one of the lines in which the Oriental practises economy. Out in the " camp " one rarely sees an umbrella, and even in the city, most of the women one meets—there are not many on a wet day—seem to have made up their minds to put off buying one for another year or two. You see them out shopping, clad in light garments that are anything but waterproof, hurrying along on their absurdly high heels, dodging the downpour from one place of shelter to another, and all with a worried, aggrieved expression, as if rain were the sort of thing that a proper system of government would confine to the country, where the animals need it. It is rather strange, seeing how they feel about it, that the city has not evolved shopping centres of colonnades like those of the Plaza Independencia, or arcades after the manner of old Berne or the Rue de Rivoli in Paris. Not having any such protection, the entire population lives and moves in helpless, patient discomfort under the affliction of a wet day. All outdoor work comes to a standstill; steamers cease loading and unloading cargo; the goods depôts of the railway become congested with tarpaulin-covered wagons. A fortnight's continuous rain would paralyse the country's industries, quite apart from the fact that it would cut off all internal communications. Your South American working man has all the Asiatic's horror of getting wet, and none of his affection for an umbrella. But long spells of rainy weather are very unusual, even in winter, and the sunshine is of so reassuring a quality that these people are justified, no doubt, in waiting till the clouds roll by; and the philosophy of *mañana* serves them in good stead on these and on all other occasions.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ESTANCIA LIFE IN URUGUAY

AND so, at last, we come to our muttons and to the *estancia* which rears them. It lies in the Department of Soriano, about 120 miles inland from Montevideo, between the western extension of the Central Uruguay Railway and the River Uruguay, in a bend of the Rio Maciel. Its nearest station on the railway is Palmitas, a matter of nine leagues away. When the roads are navigable, that is to say, when the intervening rivulets are not in flood and the mud not over your axles, you may expect to reach it from Montevideo in one and the same day. You leave the city by a train which starts at 8 a.m. and meanders leisurely through San José, Santa Catalina, and other slumbering places in the sun, all absurdly alike, passing through country which to the uninitiated eye appears to be chiefly devoted to the production of thistles; unless the engine-driver or guard has found business or pleasure of absorbing interest somewhere *en route*, you should reach Palmitas somewhere about 4 p.m. There is a restaurant car on the train where you get a very vile lunch, combined with very excellent opportunities for studying types, manners and customs, and there is generally a good deal of useful local colour to be derived from the conversations of loquacious *compadres* by the way, so that one forgets the deliberate sluggishness of the train. After a while, indeed, it seems to fit in with the family-party atmosphere of the entire proceedings,

A MODEL ESTANCIA: HEREFORD CATTLE AT "CANTA FIERO"



THE ESTANCIA UP-TO-DATE: "LOS CORALES," RAFAELO, SANTA FE, ARGENTINA

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just as it does in other lands where time is of no particular value.

There are two rivers, or rather two big streams, to be crossed between Palmitas and our *estancia*. If there has been no rain for some days, you can generally cross them at the road fords in a motor-car; in that case, the nine leagues are only a matter of some two hours' comparatively swift and luxurious journey. This may sound bad going for a distance of less than thirty miles; but in the interior of Uruguay the *calle* is a road only by courtesy. As a matter of fact it is a strip of land, twenty-two metres wide, fenced off from the adjoining "camp," but distinguishable from it only by the fact that the thistles, burr plants and other weeds grow thereon more luxuriously, and that the part of it over which carts and cattle pass is an everlasting tangle of ruts and gulleys and small chasms at the best of times.

By the laws of Uruguay it is decreed that the *calle* must be twenty-two metres wide, wherever the necessity for a highway has been recognised as part of the scheme of things; also somewhere at the back of this scheme, there exist, I believe, surveyors and inspectors of highways—unseen, remote, elusive—whose business it is to levy and expend sums for the construction and maintenance of the public thoroughfares; but official energy in this matter of construction begins and ends in the neighbourhood of the capital. There has been a beginning of good roadmaking of recent years—one from Montevideo to Florida and another to San José; but beyond these efforts the Government's activities have so far been limited to earnest and eloquent confession of the nation's needs and the appointment of the officials aforesaid. Meanwhile, beyond the vicinity of the Metropolitan Department, all the country's internal communications

remain at the mercy of the weather. In the case of our *estancia,* for example—and it is typical—a few inches of rain mean that communication with the railway becomes impossible for anything except a peon on horseback; the rivers become raging torrents and the roads morasses of glutinous mud, through which eight-horse teams can scarcely draw a laden cart. There are often days, and sometimes weeks, together in the rainy season when even the postman (a private individual paid by half a dozen neighbouring *estancias* to fetch mails and parcels from the railway twice a week) is unable to go his rounds.

There are a good many things in Uruguay which the stranger within its gates finds hard to reconcile with the Government's fervent protestations of progressive virtue, but of them all none is so utterly inexplicable as this indifference to the provision of reliable means of communication and transport, in a country whose whole existence centres in the production of food products for export. The first thing which strikes a traveller in the interior is the lack of roads for wheeled traffic; the second, is the absence of a national telephone service, obviously a matter of vital necessity in a country like this. Officials in Montevideo will tell you that the blame lies with the *estancieros,* who are quite content with the existing state of affairs, who desire neither macadamised roads nor telephones, especially if they are expected to contribute anything towards their cost. It is true enough that a great many landowners, Basques and natives, and even native-born sons of Englishmen, are good, stubborn passive resisters in the matter of any change in their fixed ways of living and doing business. They regard with indifference, if not with active dislike, all the machinery and scientific devices with which practical and

progressive *estancieros* have replaced the happy-go-lucky methods of the good old days. If left to themselves, exempt from laws and the fastidious stipulations of buyers, they would prefer to continue in the picturesque ways and traditions of the Gaucho, using the lasso rather than the *brete*,[1] letting their cattle die of *garapata* and their sheep of fluke and *lumbriz*, rather than be bothered with cattle baths and windmills; despising agriculture as an occupation only suitable for Italian immigrants. All over the country, and especially in the north, you may still see *estancias* conducted on these lines, and large estates belonging to men of wealth, where the owner pigs it out in patriarchal fashion in a tumble-down house, where the flocks and herds are left to struggle with their environment as best they may and the fences take care of themselves. *Estancieros* of this type are not unlike Irish farmers in many ways—cheerful fatalists, much given to the accumulation of money for its own sake, quite incapable of getting any satisfaction out of their wealth other than that of adding field to field; shrewd as a rule, and keen at a bargain, yet ignorantly wasteful and doggedly conservative. The unseen forces of economic pressure are slowly but surely compelling landowners of this type to change many of their ways. The days of the Gaucho are numbered; the Ford car and the motor plough loom large on his horizon. Fertile soil and its food products have become too valuable on this hungry planet for a land like this to continue in the archaic simplicity of mediæval conditions. One of the first results of the war in Europe will surely be to precipitate

[1] The *brete* is an enclosure of cattle-pens connected with a stout wooden rail, passing through which, the animals are easily and rapidly sorted, dehorned, branded, etc. The peons much prefer the old method of lassoing each beast and dealing with it in the open.

a flood of hungry emigrants to the subtropical and temperate regions of South America, and with it a rapid development of agriculture in countries such as Uruguay, Paraguay and Southern Brazil. But before agriculture must come roads.

The powers that be in Montevideo—educational, fiscal and economic authorities—are all very eloquent in impressing upon the *estanciero* the benefits which he and the country would derive from making agriculture and forestry a part of his business. Officials—their name is legion—are for ever distributing pamphlets, giving lectures, and offering to provide expert tuition, seeds, saplings and what not. There are special travelling inspectors and veterinary surgeons appointed to give instruction and advice for dealing with locusts, ticks, microbes and insect pests, for the selection of seeds and the scientific rotation of crops. There are, moreover, a small number of "model" *estancias*, mostly owned by Englishmen, in which these things are done to the satisfaction of all concerned and the mild amusement of their unconverted neighbours—places which afford a very fair indication of what might be done, not only to improve the production of the country, but the conditions of existence for the peon and the *chacrero*. But all these activities of officials and of individual *estancieros* are obviously and hopelessly useless, so long as it remains economically impossible for landowners to sell any crops that are grown at more than ten or twelve miles distance from the railway. The official mind perceives this simple truth (I have discussed it with many, from the President downwards, and never found it questioned), yet it continues to distribute good advice and to leave the roads in their abysmal sloughs. The thing is inexplicable—officialdom offers no solution of the mystery—for Uruguay has obviously

everything to gain in creating facilities for road transport throughout the country, if only because it would give her an immediate advantage over the Argentine. A large portion of Argentina is incapable of providing itself with good roads because of its total lack of stone; in Uruguay there is an unlimited supply of surface outcrop granite ready to the roadmaker's hand.

Consider the existing condition of affairs as it affects the *estanciero* living ten or twelve leagues from Palmitas. Assume that he or his wife has gone to Montevideo and is now returning to the "camp." The delivery of letters and telegrams being a matter beyond all prevision, he must have made arrangements, which can by no means be changed, to have a carriage or motor-car at the station to meet the train on a certain day. He has no means of knowing whether, in the interval, the rivers may not have become impassable as the result of local storms; they may even become so while he is on the journey from Montevideo. If, through any accident or misunderstanding, there is no conveyance to meet him on arrival, he is practically marooned, and Palmitas is hardly the spot that one would choose to wait in till the clouds roll by. Like most of the smaller wayside stations, the place consists of the railway buildings, the *pulperia* opposite, and a roofed shed for horses; beyond these, the prospect consists of a vast untenanted expanse of "camp," oppressive in the monotony of its unbroken horizons, and a highway of liquid mud, stretching away into the distance from the railway, up and down over the slopes of a landscape that runs in rolling lines, like waves. At a pinch you can put up for the night at the *pulperia* (I did it once in company with a wandering barber and an apparently innocent Japanese hawker of soapstone ornaments), but the sleeping accommodation, consisting of a billiard-table and the

floor, is primitive, and the general atmosphere of the place somewhat depressing, especially on the days when no train is due. A native, thus cut off from his own place, having generally little or no baggage to worry about, may borrow a horse and ride home; but if burdened with his family or other impedimenta, he must either go on by the train to Mercedes, and make his way back from thence when circumstances permit, or hire a conveyance of sorts, with the aid of the *pulpero*, and risk the perils of the road. An *estancia* connected by telephone (at its own risk and expense) with the nearest railway station escapes many of these vicissitudes, for the railway company transmits telephone messages, by telegram, to and from Montevideo, and one can thus be kept informed of local weather conditions. For the marooned traveller, the telephone of neighbouring *estancias* affords a very present help in time of trouble, provided always that you can get it, and the station-master, to work. The hospitality of the camp is an open-handed and genuine thing, a matter of time-honoured tradition; not only is the wayfarer sure of a welcome, but all the resources of the establishment are placed ungrudgingly at his disposal, in the hidalgo manner. So when you cannot reach your own place, you explain your plight to the nearest telephone-owning neighbour, confident in the certainty that he will deliver you out of your affliction.

An *estancia* without a telephone is like a ship at sea without wireless; but, as a rule, the trouble and expense of installing and maintaining a private line is too much for the native landowner, who prefers to remain cut off from all contact with the outside world, except such as he may get by means of mounted peons. It seems almost incredible that men whose success in business must depend largely on keeping in touch with the Montevideo

A LAGUNA OF THE MACIEL

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markets, should be content to remain in this sort of isolation, yet so it is. The telephone is instinctively resented, as a destroyer of that peace of body and mind which the native derives from the *mañana* philosophy. In sudden emergencies, when he needs a doctor from Mercedes to attend to his wife, or wants to know if the cattle sale at Palmitas has been postponed, he will ride over to his English or German neighbour and ask to be allowed to send a message, expatiating eloquently the while on the advantages of these modern improvements. In the same way, when there is a visitation of the *garapata* tick, he will come and ask you for the loan of your cattle-bath to bathe his beasts at ten cents a head, but the idea of providing his own *estancia* with these new-fangled devices appeals to him not at all.

Some day, no doubt, these people will awaken to the fact that what the country chiefly requires, pending better communications and the subdivision of large properties, is an efficient national telephone service, installed and controlled by the State, and supplied to all *estancieros* at a reasonable cost. I do not suppose that any member of the Government has ever travelled in Sweden and Norway, but it would certainly pay them to send an intelligent young man to report on the use of the telephone in the more remote agricultural districts of these countries. Meanwhile, and for some time to come, Don Diego and Don Antonio, Don Cesario and Don José will continue in their easy-going *mas ó menos* ways. They will ask the postman to find out next time he goes to the station, whether the sheep dip (ordered a month ago) has arrived, whether there has been any reply to the telegram sent last week about the missing plough, what is the price of petrol at the *pulperia*, and when the Juez de Paz will be able to come out and look into the little

matter of fence-breaking and missing sheep, reported to him by the Comisario goodness knows how long ago. And while the postman executes these commissions in his own leisurely way (or forgets them altogether, which is just as probable), the sheep go undipped and the land unploughed; the motor-car stands idle in the *galpon*, and the mystery of the missing sheep—every one knows where they are, of course—will remain unsolved by the authorities. And every day Don Diego and Don Antonio, Don Cesario and Don José, thinking of these things as they suck their evening maté and contemplate the glories of sunset, will turn each to his wife, or major-domo, or *capataz*, as the case may be, and breathe the magic word—the dreamer's comfort and the sluggard's joy—*mañana*. After all, why worry? There is always a to-morrow.

We will suppose, *ne vous déplaise*, that, roads and weather permitting, we are on our way from Palmitas station to the *estancia*. There being doubts as to the depth of water at the Maciel ford, the major-domo—a camp-bred man of British parentage—has come to meet us with a high-wheeled cart, something after the style of a Normandy *diligence*, drawn by six horses. The sun is fast dropping to the skyline, in splendour of gold and rose, and all the land lies as if gently breathing before sleep, in a purple glow which deepened into darkness on the eastern horizon. Here and there, clear-cut against the sky, a clump of trees stands out, poplars or eucalyptus or the gnarled *ombú*—generally speaking, the site of an *estancia* or other human habitation. These *montes* are the wayfarer's landmarks on the uncharted highways of solitudes that are eternally the same; the only distinctive features in league after league of gently swelling hillocks, of winding river-beds, for ever lined with thickets of willow, *tala*

and *ñandabay*. Your peon knows every *monte* or single tree miles and miles away, knows how long they have been there, and who planted them. Yonder avenue of olives and paraisos, for instance, was planted thirty years ago by old Wallingford, the man who built the church by the roadside, that still awaits a parson. Those five great poplars on the skyline mark the boundary of a famous German *estancia*, the property of a man who knew the value of trees and how to make them grow. And over there in the far distance, dark against the last crimson and orange glow of sunset, on the rising ground beyond the river, is the goodly company of trees that gather to a shade around and about the *quinta* of our *estancia*.

Very silent are these solitudes of the purple land at evening. There is scarcely any traffic on the highway; a Syrian pedlar on foot with his pack upon his back, a peon or two on horseback, a cart laden with wool on its way to the railway. But generally the road lies empty ahead, and the wire-fenced fields that stretch away on every side as far as the eye can see, are peopled only by grazing beasts. Our cart, jolting over the ruts half hidden by the rank growth of *espartillo* grass, sends frightened partridges scurrying through the fences; great hornèd owls come noiselessly out of the gathering dusk, beating the ground like harriers; the little burrowing owls, dainty *Lechusa*, flit from one fence post to another, gravely interested in your proceedings. A brace of duck rise from a swampy hollow of the road; from overhead, rising and falling like the note of an æolian harp, comes the drumming of snipe in the evening light. Now and again a skunk, very busy and quite indifferent to public opinion, shows up amongst the thistles, a bustling bundle of black and white with tail erect, that stops to look at

you impertinently as you go by. But for the most part there is nothing to disturb the brooding silence and solitude of the camp. As for human habitations, there is the half-way *pulperia*, where half a dozen peons are finishing a game of bowls in the dusk; a blacksmith's shop, from whence comes the faint thrumming of a guitar with snatches of most melancholy song; a school-house with a drooping flagstaff—the children come to it on horseback from miles around; one or two roadside houses of small landowners, and here and there the squalid huts of agricultural squatters—the despised *chacreros*—just enough evidence of human activity to disturb the illusion of complete isolation. For the *estancias*, to whom these endless acres of pasture land belong, with all their flocks and herds, each with its staff of resident peons, lie usually at a distance from the highway, hidden amidst their surrounding trees.

"La Britanica"—our destination—stands on a little hill, some eighty feet above the river. Like most *estancia* houses in these parts, it is architecturally without pretensions or distinction, merely an elaboration of the native adobe style of building, curiously primitive and lacking in adaptability. Its long low structure, facing east and west, contains dining-room, sitting-room and half a dozen bedrooms—all opening on both sides upon a verandah roofed at such an angle as to exclude as much light as possible. The Orientals' dislike of sunshine and fresh air is just as manifest in the "camp" as it is in the city; the windows of these rooms are small, iron-barred and provided with heavy green blinds, so that on a cloudy day it is difficult to read anywhere indoors, and even when the sun is shining one moves in a sepulchral twilight all the day long. Often, in order to attain to the depths of murkiness congenial to native ideas, the verandah is

LOADING THE WOOL CLIP

[*To face p.* 24.

shaded by a vine-covered trellis, a very favourite gathering place for ants and mòsquitoes. At each end of the building there is an outflanking wing, one containing the office and the other the kitchen, bath-room and store-room. The bath-room is a new feature, a concession to European standards of cleanliness and comfort. The old-fashioned *estanciero's* sentiments on the subject of sanitary arrangements and domestic hygiene conform, like his dwelling, to the simplicity of native ideas. The lighting arrangements as a whole are equally primitive, consisting of kerosene lamps; here and there, a few English landowners or managers who have not entirely succumbed to the seductions of *mas ó menos*, have introduced acetylene or small electric light plants, but these things are only suitable and safe in establishments where discipline and method have overcome the natives' aversion to things which require regular attention. Good drinking water is pumped by hand from an artesian well; for other purposes and for the drinking troughs of the horses and cows that are fed about the house, there is an American windmill with a large tank. It is the duty of the *quintero* —euphemism for gardener—to oil this windmill every Saturday; he regards it accordingly with hatred and loathing.

There are men and places in Uruguay which have demonstrated the fact that there is nothing in the soil or climate of the country to prevent a garden being made a thing of beauty and a regular producer of the kindly fruits of the earth. There is an *estancia* close to us, for example, managed by a wideawake Irishman with a treasure of a wife, where the garden blooms like an oasis in the wilderness. All kinds of trees grow there, olives and mimosa, plane and poplar, acacia, firs, and the Australian wattle—and all about it is a neat trimmed

privet hedge. There are orchards of peach trees and pears, oranges, quinces and lemons; and in the kitchen garden all manner of English fruit and vegetables. Roses, dahlias, heliotrope flourish, alongside of the gardenia and the tuberose. Nevertheless, all over the country, *estancieros* of the good old school conducting you over the melancholy *quintas*, where a few mouldy peach trees rear their heads amidst a tangle of tomatoes and invalid cabbages, will solemnly assure you that, what with droughts and locusts, cultivating a garden is so much labour lost. In the same way, they will not trouble themselves to plant trees that the locusts will eat, or such as require much care in the sapling stage. About their houses you rarely find any but the *paraiso*, the *ombú*, and the eucalyptus. Of course, the grasshopper is a burden, and when the invasion occurs on the grand scale, the results are heart-breaking, both for the agriculturist and the gardener. But there are years in which neither drought nor locust plague afflicts us, when the son of the soil, were he so minded, might eat of the fruit of his own fig tree and vine, and good fresh vegetables. But he is not so minded. Tilling the soil he regards as a menial business, only fit for Italians; as for vegetables, give him a sweet potato, or an occasional cabbage and *sapallo* [1] with his *puchero* (all of which, he will tell you, can be brought from Dolores by the postal *diligence*), and he is satisfied. One would think that as these people are ravenous meat-eaters they would need fruit and vegetables in mitigation of their flesh diet; but the maté which they take at all times and seasons seems to fulfil that purpose, for the average peon is undeniably strong

[1] The *sapallo* is a pumpkin resembling our vegetable marrow, but of more coherent fibre. It will grow anywhere, can be kept for months, and is therefore generally obtainable.

and healthy. He sucks maté, impelled by the same instinct that teaches a dog to eat grass, and the medicinal value of the brew is undeniable. Of the ceremonial rites and observances that have grown up about the drinking of the *yerba*, and of their effect upon character and social conditions, more anon.

Beyond the enclosed *quinta* are the out-buildings. First, low-lying in the deep shade of a *paraiso* grove, are the peons' quarters, with their kitchen attached. Beyond them is a long *galpon*, or shed, which contains the sheep-shearing machinery, a wool press, a pile of hides and sheepskins, and a Ford car. There are other sheds for stacking oats and alfalfa and maize, and for the carts and ploughs and tools. Around and about all these, an unnumbered host of turkeys, ducks and hens pick up a fat living. They congregate every morning, in horrid expectancy, about the place where the house-peon kills the daily sheep; every evening they invade the house enclosure, what time the horses and milch cows get their oats and corn. It is the business and pleasure of a mixed pack of dogs to keep all fowls out of the compound, so that, if noise and movement make life, we have it. All these birds, even the turkeys, have thus acquired remarkable powers of flight. They roost at night in the big *ombú* trees near the gate, and during the day roam far out into the "camp." *Estancieros* of the good old school will assure you that this is the only way to keep hens healthy; the fact that it produces no eggs is of little or no importance, the carnivorous habits of the true Oriental disdain such effeminate food as butter and eggs.

The peons' quarters are usually dark, dismal and dirty, meagrely furnished with beds and wooden boxes; brick walls and floors, no drainage, no privacy and no attempt at comfort or sanitation. Yet the men who eat and sleep

in these hovels are a very decent, self-respecting lot, men whose conversation and manners are generally more polished, more imbued with native dignity, than those of most workmen at the centres of our civilisation. Beneath the simplicity and swaggering indifference to domesticity of the Gaucho stock, there lies not only a deep vein of romantic sentimentality, but a great deal of natural good breeding, kindly philosophy and instinctive good taste; so that the humblest peon bears himself with unaffected ease and dignity wherever he may be. I never see the quarters assigned to these men without wondering whether, as most landowners assert, they really would not thank you for better accommodation or appreciate some conveniences and comforts of civilised existence. I cannot quite convince myself that, because their philosophy is ever cheerful, and their tastes unfastidious, one is justified in housing them less decently than pedigree cattle. And I never see Pedro and Sancho and Pantaleon, all got up in their Sunday best, ponchos and silk neckcloths and silver-mounted harness, without wondering how they reconcile all this brave finery with the squalor of their sleeping and eating places.

The permanent staff which dwells in our quarters consists of seven men, who are paid by the month. These include the house-peon, whose business it is to keep the compound tidy, kill and prepare the daily meat, feed the pigs and milch cows and do odd jobs, the peon's cook who attends also to the curing and drying of hides and skins, and the *quintero*, or gardener, always ready to volunteer for any and every job that will take him away from the garden. The other four men attend to the routine work of the *estancia*—bathing and dosing sheep, going the daily round of the camp, looking after the cattle, repairing fences, and so on. In addition to these,

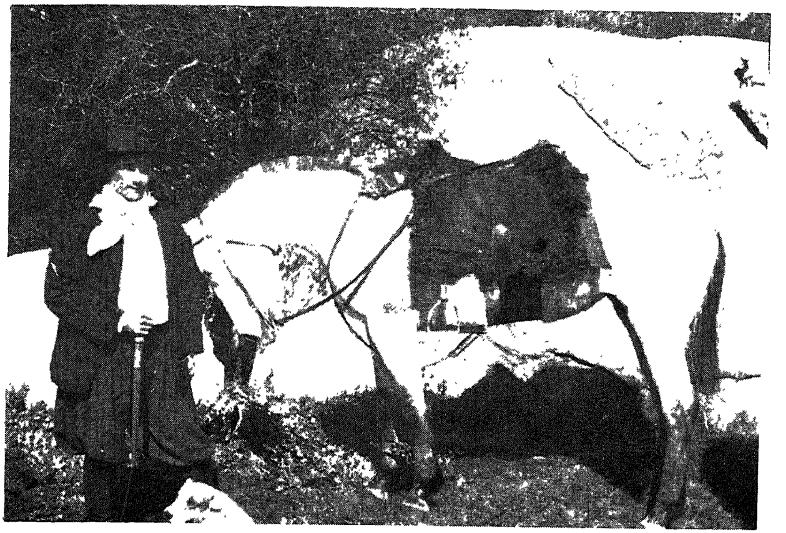
there are generally a number of day men, engaged for special jobs; fence-makers, who work on mileage contracts, ploughmen, mechanics, masons, horse-tamers, sheep-shearers, nomads of various kinds, paid by the day or by the job, whose visible worldly wealth consists of a horse and a small bundle of clothes. Some of the permanent staff have been years on the place, but as a rule the peon is a capricious wanderer, moving from one place to another merely for the sake of change. Their wages vary from ten to fifteen dollars—£2 to £3 a month, with food provided by the *estancia.*

The female staff consists of a cook—frequently the wife of one of the peons—and a housemaid; these share a bedroom in the kitchen wing. As a rule the women engaged for work of this kind in the "camp" are the better for being either old or ugly. If physically attractive, the performance of their duties is bound to suffer, sooner or later, from sentimental complications, the end of which is to add one more to the long list of Uruguay's illegitimate children. Our cook, who rejoices in the name of Nicasia, is no longer young or beautiful; she shows no signs of a romantic or even flighty disposition, but perseveres nevertheless in a sort of routine habit of maternity. Her latest offspring, aged six months, spends its days and develops its lungs in a wool-lined box in the kitchen, and rumour says that she has left five other little pledges of her promiscuous infatuations with relatives or charitable institutions in various parts of the country. These native women of the humbler classes conform outwardly to the national code of circumspection and are as careful of appearances as any fine lady of the capital; but, under the rose, their domestic morality is entirely a matter of primitive instincts and opportunity. It is one of many inexplicable things in this part of the

world that a democratic State which professes deep concern for the well-being of the people and devotion to high ideals, should have gone out of its way to discourage the religious ceremony of matrimony and should fail to protect the unmarried mother by compelling the father to pay for the maintenance of his child. What on earth is the good of all these solemn conferences of professors and politicians about child welfare, while the law allows men to escape the fundamental obligations of a parent and nothing is done, as far as the bulk of the population is concerned, to establish society on a basis of decent homes?

Our housemaid answers to the name of Benita. I often wonder how and where these illiterate people find the preposterous names which they inflict upon their defenceless offspring, especially as for most of them there is neither priest nor dominie to consult in the matter. Of course the saints and festivals of the Church supply a great many, and these are to be found in every cheap almanac, but who assists these fond mothers to extract names for their infants from the depths of the Old Testament, the muster rolls of ancient mythology, and the chronicles of Roman history? Natividad and Concepcion are awful but explicable; but whence came Claudia, Lucretia and Aurelia to the "camp"; who invented Penelope of the Pampas, and who first thought of calling a female child Generosa? And the men stagger under burdens just as grievous. Cesario and Jesus go a sheep-dipping together. Macedonio and Baltasar, Romeo and Fausto round up the cattle on a thousand hills.

But to return to our housemaid. Benita is engaged to be married next year to an honest *mecanico* in Dolores (the marriage may have to come off sooner, of course, in anticipation of an interesting event), and she is working



THE CAPATAZ

BENITA

[*To face p.* 250.

to earn the cost of a combined trousseau and layette. A good girl is Benita, steady, honest and cheerful, essentially native in all her ways, and speaking no language but Spanish; yet she has the face and features of a typical English country lass. Hers is a history not uncommon in these parts; she is the daughter of an English sailor, one of the many wanderers who, deserting from ships in the River Plate, drifted up country, working their way as peons from one *estancia* to another, and finally settling down as married men in some small *rancho*. There is a world of unperceived romance, and something of tragedy, for me in this purely English type, blooming here in an alien land, all unconscious of its birthright. Sometimes, when there are guests and she stands silently waiting to refill the maté, in the typically patient attitude of the "Oriental" serving-woman, there comes a look upon her face as if she heard, afar off and mysterious, the voices of her own people. She doesn't, I know; probably she knows nothing about England, for her father died when she was a baby. But it pleases me to think so, all the same.

A good deal of English blood has made its way into these backwaters and by-ways of the Pampas and then lost itself. Amongst the peons who go racing on a Sunday afternoon you will find good old English, Scotch and Irish names, pronounced *à l'espagnole*, attached to swaggering native blades, all poncho, knife and jingling spurs. There is a curly-headed, blue-eyed lad who comes over with messages from the *estancia*, "Los Cardos," an untameable and vagabond imp, known as Murfé at every *pulperia* and racing-ground for miles around; but of the romantic history of Murphy *père*, neither he nor any of his *compadres* know anything. I know one heir to an ancient English baronetcy, who with his mother and

brothers live the easy-going life of the "camp," and, speaking no English, refuses to concern himself in any way with his ancestral acres and hereditary dignities.

All around the *estancia* enclosure, over wave upon wave of gently rolling hillocks, down to the River Maciel on the north and east, and up to the public highway on the south, stretches our little territory of "Britanica camp." It is a small territory, as things go in this land of huge estates, a matter of two thousand five hundred hectarios, or about seven thousand acres. Most of the properties owned by foreign-born *estancieros* and companies are much larger. Here in Soriano, the size of the average *estancia* is probably not more than five or six thousand hectarios. But the further north you go, towards Artigas and the borders of Brazil, the greater become the tracts of land owned by private individuals. Properties of twenty and thirty thousand hectarios are not uncommon in those parts, and despite all the politicians' professed anxiety to limit the growth of these mammoth estates and to provide land for immigrants, the rich man's mania for adding field to field is unchecked. The number of British-owned *estancias* in this part of the world is comparatively small, and it is becoming smaller; certainly it is less than it was forty years ago. The majority of present-day landowners are either natives born, or naturalised Basques, Italians, Swiss, Brazilians, Spaniards and Portuguese. Most of the early English *estancieros*, whose names and words linger, as kindly memories, in the wayside annals of the "camp," came here and bought their land when it was to be had for a song, when a man could stock and equip his place with a couple of thousand pounds, and run it for next to nothing. I have an old stock book of "La Britanica," dated 1872, which shows that, in those comparatively recent days, sheep

were worth thirty cents apiece (say, one and fourpence), horses two dollars, and cattle between five and nine dollars. Many of these pioneers having made their fortunes, as the result of the rapidly increased value of land and stock, left Uruguay for England, and their properties were either sold or leased to natives. The Government's lately adopted (and perfectly justifiable) policy of taxing absentee landlords has naturally led to a further reduction in the number of English *estancias*. Under existing conditions, and at the present price of land and cattle, no new-comer can hope to make money by buying property in this part of Uruguay, unless he has a large amount of capital to invest and is prepared to live on the place and manage it himself. There is no doubt but that the value of land will continue to increase, partly as the result of Europe's increasing need of food supplies, and partly because of the rich Uruguayan's or Brazilian's insatiable appetite and jealous competition for property; but the field is no longer open to the small investor, as in former days. Up in the north, in Artigas and Tacuarembó, the value of land—when any owner can be induced to sell—is generally between $30 and $40 per hectario, and until quite recently it could be rented (for a maximum lease of ten years) at $2 a "square," [1] but prices are rising and before long will no doubt reach the level of Soriano, where good average "camp" sells for $90 to $100 per hectario and commands a rent of $4 to $5 per square. Old *estancieros* will tell you that thirty or forty years ago all this land of Soriano was good grazing "camp" and that would not only feed but fatten cattle. They did

[1] In land measurement the "square" has been abolished for all legal and official purposes, but natives continue, nevertheless, to reckon and describe properties in squares. Like the League, it is a variable quantity in various districts; but it is roughly two-thirds of a hectario.

not know even by name the coarse *espartillo*, which now covers the country like an ever-spreading garment. They will also tell you (unless they are passive resisters, of the good, old-crusted *laisser-aller* school) that the quality of the pasture has steadily deteriorated since then, chiefly because of the improvidence and ignorance and greed which overstocked it with sheep, and refused to improve it by ploughing when the rank growth of *espartillo* had smothered the good grasses. On many *estancias* the native's procrastinating conservatism still declines to recognise the obvious fact, that persistence in these time-honoured methods of farming must greatly reduce the productivity of the soil. Overstocking is not so prevalent as it was, especially since the decimating drought of 1916, but failure to improve the land by agriculture is general. There are thousands upon thousands of acres where the dank *espartillo*, thistles and the poison weed *mio-mio* flourish luxuriantly, smothering a small struggling under-growth of good grass. *Estancieros* of the hard-baked *mas ó menos* persuasion, will point with pride to their *mio-mio* and thistles, as proof of the richness of the land, and they will tell you complacently that in time of drought, when all the good grass has gone, the *espartillo* serves to keep cattle alive. There is no doubt as to the richness of the good black soil that nourishes all this futile fruitless growth, nor any doubt as to its infinite capacity of production, if properly treated; but it is curiously typical of the "Oriental" mind to allow its quality to remain proved by the vigour of its weed-crop, year after year. Sooner or later, of course, even the most dogged of these conservatives must be led by their own experience, and by the profitable examples of more enlightened methods in their midst, to give the soil a chance; they must learn in time that alfalfa and oats, wheat and maize, pay better

than coarse grass and thistles. But for the time being Soriano is content to see most of its fertile land produce a grass that sheep cannot eat and cattle refuse so long as they can find better pasture.

The Government's ideas and admonitions concerning the necessity for agriculture and the rotation of crops to restore the productivity of the soil are, as usual, admirable. Cultivated land is relieved of 50 per cent. of taxation, and the Ministry of Agriculture is prepared to distribute good seeds and much good advice to all comers. On most British-owned *estancias* the ploughing of bad land proceeds as a matter of course, but it is evident that the country as a whole must remain infected with bad grass and weeds until all landowners are compelled by law to clean a certain proportion of their "camp" every year, and until the local authorities take steps to prevent the public highways disseminating weeds and animal disease germs as they do at present. In certain districts, where the benefits of ploughing have been realised, and where the railway lies near enough for the crops to be marketed at Montevideo, the land is sometimes let out to agricultural settlers—Italians, Basques or transient immigrants from the Canary Islands—who farm it for two or three years, surrendering one-third of their harvest as rent. Most of these horny-handed colonists bring their families with them, and live in hovels little better than those of Paraguay Indians. When the farmers' luck is good, their progeny increases and overflows with extraordinary rapidity, but a visitation of locusts or a drought means heavy infant mortality amongst the *chacreros*. They can insure against hail-storms, but against a serious invasion of locusts there is no remedy, and many a poor devil has seen all his year's work destroyed in a few hours. Each squatter generally farms about

150 "squares," and in a good year he may make $40 a square from wheat and linseed. The landowner feeds him and his family on credit till the first harvest is reaped. Farming under these conditions practically amounts to laying odds against the locust—it is a gamble which seems to have a peculiar attraction for the Italians, who like their labour seasoned with speculation. There is another humble type of *chacrero*, the hireling who takes no risks and asks no favours of fortune, who sells his labour to the landowner for seven or eight dollars a month and his food, and spends all his dreary days following the oxen or driving the motor plough up and down the deadly monotony of these half-mile furrows. These men live in tents, moving camp as their ploughing advances, for the land on which they work is often several miles distant from the *estancia* quarters. Since the war, and because of the scarcity of petrol and oil, ploughing with oxen has become cheaper than with the motor. The *chacrero* teams are yoked and handled here just as they are in the Piedmont; it needs powerful cattle to haul the blade, even of a light Russian plough, through the heavy black earth, especially when it carries a load of coarse hummocky grass.

The stock of cattle at the "Britanica" generally consists of about 1200 Herefords, chiefly breeding cows, and some 5000 Lincoln sheep; there are also a troop of semi-wild horses and the small remnant of a herd of ostriches. In former days, before the "camp" pasture deteriorated, Durham cattle and Merino sheep were the breeds generally preferred by *estancieros*, but experience has shown that these species have not the stamina of the Hereford and Lincoln breeds in times of drought or when the locusts have devoured all the fine grass; nor have they the same capacity of resistance to the ticks, worms and other pests

that lie in wait for them on every side. What with the foot-and-mouth disease, carbuncle, maggots and *garapata* to plague the cattle; with fluke, scab, *lumbriz*, birds of prey, and the panic of sudden cold rains to destroy the sheep, it is always a mystery to me how these animals, left largely to their own devices, manage to survive and multiply as they do. On properly managed *estancias* the wretched beasts are continually being dosed, bathed and inoculated against one disease or another; if the Republic's multitudinous laws were strictly enforced on all the others, no doubt but that foot-and-mouth disease, scab and other infectious ailments would be far less prevalent than they are. But *mañana* is stronger than the official Veterinary Inspector; indeed the veterinary himself is usually a worshipper at the shrine of that lotus-eating deity. The only laws which are generally effective are those which refer to the registration of sales and purchases of stock and the movements of beasts from one department to another.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE SON OF THE SOIL

By the law of the land, in Uruguay, as in the Argentine, every child born in the country is entitled to citizenship as a son of the soil—*hijo del pais*. Hence, by the way, the existence and official recognition of the dual nationality of Anglo-Argentines and Anglo-Orientals, a very delicate and complicated business in time of war. The son of an Englishman may, if he so desire and declare, retain his undivided nationality; but as a general rule, unless educated in England, the tendency of the native-born is to become Spanish-speaking, Spanish-thinking South Americans, and to take life as the natives take it. Indeed, a man need not be born in the country to become so imbued with the comfortable philosophy of *mañana* and *mas ó menos* that the strenuous qualities of the Anglo-Saxon, all his painstaking energies, fall gently from him like a creed outworn. Swiftly insidious is the creed which makes a man the lord of time, who was his bustling slave! I have seen Englishmen in these parts, *estancieros*, camp-managers and "poor white" wanderers, who for easy-going, siesta-loving slackness can hold their own with any son of the soil—men who will suck their maté and talk solemnly of all irrelevant things under heaven, leaving undone the things that should be done, for sheer love of procrastination; men who, in their domestic and social relations, have assimilated and often intensified the "Oriental" point of view. The tribes on our *estancia* frontiers will be discussed in the following chapter; for

the present we are concerned with the peon, the labouring man of the "camp."

It is daybreak of a cloudless morning in July. There has been a sharp frost overnight, and a pale white mist, like a soft robe of gossamer, floats gently in the clefts and undulations of the land. From the trees about the house comes a sleepy twittering, which rapidly grows into a noisy parliament of birds. First to awake is the bien-te-veo, perkiest and prettiest of shrikes, and next the oven-bird, that seems to be always looking for something, as fussily as a starling. From farther off, in the tree-tops, comes the slumbrous note of the big wood-pigeon, and the shrill chatter of green parrots; and then, as the day breaks, a great choir invisible of fervent little singers. Nowhere on earth is there more wealth of bird life than in the South American "camp."

As the dawn comes up, to gild the outline of the low purple hill which rises above the bed of the Maciel, our English major-domo emerges from his room, and, crossing over to the big *galpon*, rings the bell which says that the day's work has begun. The peons have been up for the last hour, bringing in their horses, getting their breakfast and their maté; at the sound of the bell, four men saunter leisurely from the kitchen, saddle up, and ride out in the direction of the river, to round up and bring to the sheep-bath one of the flocks that has shown symptoms of scab. A mongrel sheep-dog and a nondescript sort of lurcher follow them, ready to assist in rounding up the sheep when the time comes, and meanwhile keeping a sharp look-out for hares, *molitos*,[1] and other edible prey. As

[1] The *molito* is one of the four species of armadillo found in the "camp." It is a clean feeder and, like the *tatu*, makes an excellent dish, greatly appreciated by the natives. The *peludo* is a carrion-eater and unpleasant.

they pass out of the home *potrero*,[1] another man is harnessing six horses to one of the big farm carts, to fetch sheep dip and other stores from Palmitas. Pedro, the house-peon, lolls across to the kitchen, with a maté in his hand, which, for the next half-hour, Nicasia will keep refilling with hot water and supplementing with sundry titbits, in return for a full narrative of everything and every one at yesterday's races. An engaging individual is Pedro; tall, dark and slender, for all his fifty years, with a come-hither look in his eye where the ladies are concerned, and, if report speaks truly, no laggard either in love or war. A person of polished manners, too, and easy conversation; and, like most of his class, an honest fellow as this world goes; yet, for all that, like the Chinese house-servant, a very expert absorber of unconsidered trifles. You may trust the average peon with the uncounted money in your purse, you may send him across country in charge of a troop of cattle for sale, but you cannot trust him not to make away with food and drink or tobacco, whenever occasion offers.

To a city-dweller and a tenderfoot of vegetarian habits, there is something fearful and wonderful in the carnivorous capacity of these people, without distinction of classes. The amount of meat which a peon consumes is simply prodigious, and the marvel of it is that he seems perfectly content to go on devouring it, three times a day, all the year round, without asking for variety either in its cooking or concomitants. At the "Britanica," for an average total of fourteen consumers, a sheep is slaughtered every day, except when they kill a steer or cow; the latter will

[1] All the "camp" is fenced off into *potreros*, fields that in this part of the country may vary in size between 100 and 1000 squares. The better managed the *estancia*, the more regular the size of its *potreros*, which for good working should be between 100 and 200 squares—say 250 acres.

LUNCHEON TIME AT THE BRETE

PLOUGHING UP " ESPARTILLO " CAMP

[*To face p.* 260.

last them from four to six days, according to its weight and the weather. The peon's dinner allowance of meat is usually one kilo—2¼ lbs.; he eats it either boiled as a *puchero*, with *sapallo* and sweet potatoes, or as a *guiso* (stew) with rice, or as a plain roast (*asado*); the last being the favourite method of cooking. In addition to meat, the *estancia* provides rations of biscuits—(a mighty hard tack, like ship's biscuit, which the *pulperos* sell)—*fideos*, and a porridgy cereal substance called *farina*. But these are kickshaws; your true *hijo del pais* lives for, and by, meat. If you would give him a meal according to his heart's desire, and see him do justice to his victuals, then let him slay a young steer or calf, and cook it, gridiron fashion, in the open. The meat is roasted in the skin, a few hours after killing, over a wood-fire; it is therefore abominably tough, and, to the uninitiated, a gruesome and sanguinary sight; but to the native mind, *carne con cuerro* is the last word in gastronomic satisfaction, and they devour it with a rapidity and ease which suggests the possession of a forty-ostrich-power type of digestive apparatus. Also they mildly despise the *gringo* who declines to partake freely of this gargantuan roast, and follow it up with huge chunks of stodgy pastry.

In the old days, when a sheep was worth two or three shillings, or even before the war when it was worth ten or twelve, the workers' *consumo* of meat was economically justifiable. But with wool soaring to prices hitherto undreamt of, and full-grown sheep worth 30*s.* to 40*s.* apiece, the cost of feeding a peon in the good old-fashioned wasteful way becomes a very serious item in the *estanciero's* budget. It is certainly a good deal higher than the cost of feeding the average working man in Europe. On many English-owned *estancias*, therefore, meat has been cut out of the breakfast bill of fare and replaced by coffee,

*farina* and biscuits. The innovation, though undeniably healthy, is not popular; many a peon will work for smaller wages when the *padron* allows him full scope for his carnivorous habits. And as *padrons'* instincts, most even though they be stingy in other ways, are identical with his own in this matter, he can usually find a man and a place to satisfy them. Making every allowance for the fact that their lives are spent in the open and in healthy exercise, one might expect men fed on such a diet to become bilious, scorbutic, unhealthy. As a matter of fact, they are not; on the contrary, they are strong, healthy, clear of eye and clean of skin. And the secret of their health lies, no doubt, in the beneficent qualities of the *yerba* maté, with which they wash down these otherwise intolerable quantities of meat.

The practice of maté drinking is not only an antidote to the excessive flesh diet of the South American, but as a national institution it responds and adapts itself admirably to the cult of *mañana* and *mas ó menos*. Certain superficial observers have been led to confound cause and effect, to attribute the " Oriental's " habits of light-hearted procrastination to the insidious influences of the *yerba*, to the languid ceremonial of its preparation and serving, and the sociable etiquette of discursive conversation which attends its consumption. One might as well suggest that the Chinese have acquired their aristocratic inertia and stoic fatalism by the smoking of their water pipes, a time-killing device very similar to the maté bowl in its mechanism and usage. No, the roots of the South American's sedative philosophy lie deep in the distant past, in the cradle-lands of the Moors, who moulded the race mind of conquering, dreaming Spain; they lie, too, in the tutelary spirits of this land, in the voices of winds and waters, that haunt the ancient places of vanished

Indian tribes. The cult of *mañana* here is an heritage from Moorish Spain, with a certain distinctive quality of gentleness derived, I like to think, from the Guaraný, tempering the haughty punctilio of the hidalgo with something of the spirit of one of the most lovable of races that our civilisation has doomed to extinction. The descendants of the Conquistadores acquired the habit of maté drinking from the Indians, and gradually they evolved around and about the drinking of it a ritual and code of etiquette, making it a very corner-stone of the Temple of Graceful Indolence.

The maté bowl is a natural-grown calabash or gourdlet (either *Crescentia* or *Lagenaria*), about the size of a large orange, scooped out and fitted with a thin pipe, either of reed or metal, called the *bombilla*. The *yerba maté*, the dried leaf of an Ilex indigenous to Paraguay, was known in former days as "Jesuits' Tea," because it was the good priests who first taught the Indians of their *Utopia in partibus* to cultivate it for trade purposes. The infusion of the leaf is made like ordinary tea: but here the likeness ends. The maté bowl, according to native etiquette, is the cup of welcome, and of speeding; it is an offence against the unwritten law not to offer it, like the pipe of peace, to every visitor and stranger, to the *capataz* when he comes to make his evening report, or the wool-buyer on his rounds. The bowl passes from hand to hand, each person taking his turn to suck it dry, and hand it back to the servant, who proceeds to the kitchen—generally some distance away—to refill it. If there are two or three visitors, and conversation meanders as usual down countless paths of dalliance, the *mucama* may spend most of the morning, or afternoon, going to and fro with the sociable bowl. It would never occur to any of the parties concerned to have a spirit lamp and a kettle of water

handy and to refill the maté on the spot as required. Such a proceeding would savour of vulgar haste, and interrupt the even flow of conversation. The attitude of the *padron* taking his maté, either alone or in company, combines a survival of the old Castilian *grand seigneur* attitude towards *Los Indios*, with an assertion of his patriarchal and tribal authority. The woman who bears the bowl, and there stands silently waiting to refill it, is not necessarily a servant; she may be your host's wife or daughter.

As a social institution, the maté bowl combines the business of time-killing (or time-making, as we prefer to call it in South America) with the promotion of democratic principles of equality and fraternity. Medical men in Montevideo, distracted from wisdom by much learning, assert that it is also an extremely active and effective disseminator of infectious diseases of the throat. One eminent enthusiast went so far as to give lectures on the subject, horribly illustrating, by means of a glass *bombilla*, the amount of saliva which each person sucking at the tube leaves for the next. Frightened by these shadows, some ultra-modern persons, especially those who dwell in the towns, have taken to carrying about their own *bombillas*, whilst polite society at the capital and elsewhere has firmly established the habit of afternoon tea *à l'anglaise*, leaving maté to dignified bedroom privacy in the early morning; but out in the "camp," to refuse to suck at the common pipe is regarded either as bad breeding or the ignorance of a *gringo*.

As a deterrent from any kind of physical or mental activity, the maté bowl is a triumph of human ingenuity. For being a natural gourd, and therefore round at the base, it must be held continually in the hand; and it is obvious that a hand thus employed (the other is busy with a

cigarette) cannot hold a pen. True, the idea of having a portable stand made to hold the bowl has been mooted by iconoclasts, but it has made no headway; a maté that would permit you to attend to other things is an inconceivably foolish suggestion. The bowl not being meant to leave the hand, you must go on sucking at it until it is empty; then, as it only holds a few mouthfuls, there can be no sense in attempting to begin any work before the servant returns with another brew. Your *estanciero* of the good old school very properly regards it as proof of the decadence of city life and of the rottenness of the bureaucracy that the Government has forbidden maté drinking by public servants in office hours. Before they did this, the average Government office was a triumph of maté over mind, and the supreme contempt for time and place displayed by the bondsmen of the *bombilla* had become a public scandal. It was Whitehall at tea-time, all day long, without the excuse of flappers.

Sometimes, as I have sat and watched these people at one of their interminable maté sessions, and followed them through hours of aimless and digressive talk, I have been obsessed by the hallucination that I was back again amongst genuine Orientals. Like Kalmuks, Chinese or Koreans, they will talk, literally for days, around and about a question which, on its merits, an Anglo-Saxon would dispose of in half an hour. I have known a buyer of sheepskins, making his round of our neighbourhood from Mercedes, turn up at the *estancia* at midday in a great hurry. Towards evening, after consuming some quarts of maté and discussing the war, the weather and the ways of women, he went to look at the pile of skins in the *galpon*. Then, seeing two of the men going down to fish in the river, he borrowed a horse and went off with them. A bed (on which he slept in his boots) had been prepared for

him in one of the guest-rooms as a matter of course. At dinner and afterwards he regaled us with all the latest gossip of the countryside—some of it, deep azure—but the subject of sheepskins was delicately avoided. Then, under the gibbous moon, he played to us on the guitar, and there was caña and melody till midnight. Next day, being Sunday, he gladly joined in a neighbour's picnic with *carne con cuerro*, on the wooded banks of the San Salvador. On Monday there was some desultory inspection and discussion of sheepskins (the value of the whole lot was not more than five hundred dollars), but at lunch time the Juez de Paz happened to drop in *en passant*. Now the Juez is famed for an inexhaustible fund of reminiscent anecdotes, most of which date from his trip to Paris twenty years ago; therefore, the maté session lasted well on into the afternoon, and the conversation had no place for sheepskins. The Juez stayed for dinner, and once more the moon looked down upon a scene of ambrosial conviviality untainted by sordid considerations. Next day the sheepskins were bought, and our friend departed in his tilbury, but this, I believe, was more because the Juez invited him to join in a little game of cards at a *pulperia* near Dolores than because he was in any real hurry to conclude the business. In the same way I have known our worthy neighbour Don Mario, a buyer of cattle, bustle up the road from the ford in such a hurry to leave a message, on his way to the railway, that he vowed and protested he had not even time to dismount. Finally persuaded to do so and to take a pull at the maté, incontinently all thoughts of time fell from him like a garment. After dinner, and before going to bed, he begged that he might be called at 3 a.m., which would give him time to catch the train at Palmitas. At 9 a.m. he was cheerfully smoking and chatting with the Señor

A LAGUNA ON THE SAN SALVADOR

[*To face p.* 266.

Gerente, all his business happily forgotten, and the face of Benita, as she stood gracefully leaning against a pillar of the verandah was a study in long-suffering patience. He departed at midday of the fourth day.

And this genial disregard of time and order, this contempt for business methods and husbandry, runs like a siren song through all their lives, laborious though they may be. A wandering tinsmith, riding a sorry nag, and leading another laden with pots and pans, will unsaddle at the *estancia* gate and offer his services for general repairs. One of the drinking troughs happens to be leaking, so you offer him the job. He thanks you with gentle courtesy, but explains that, his horse being thin and soldering tools heavy, he has not brought any with him this time. He nevertheless remains for two days, apparently for the sole purpose of admiring the view, and feeds with the peons. He would stay longer, but that the major-domo, whose soul is as yet unattuned to the wisdom and virtue of vagrancy, asks him to depart.

The race mind, imbued with this *mañana* philosophy, is naturally fatalist, and therefore passionately addicted to gambling. As far as one can judge by the outward and visible signs of his affections, the peon's love of gambling is generally far deeper than his love of women. He will gamble anywhere, about anything—at cards, racing, dice, or throwing the knuckle-bone. This amiable weakness makes him the natural prey of the *pulpero*, whose premises provide him with the only convenient meeting-place. The *pulperias* are generally run by Spaniards, Basques or Italians; shrewd rogues, these, vendors of strong drink, money-lenders and usurers, and speculators in land and stock. They grow rich, not only upon the squandered earnings of the peon, but upon the gambling propensities and slack improvidence of native *estancieros*. As a class

they are despised and yet feared by the *hijo del pais*, in much the same way that the Jew is despised and feared by Russia's peasantry. The surprising thing about them, to my mind, is that so few of them, comparatively speaking, die violent deaths.

For the peon, though at heart *bon enfant*, and usually of a reasonable and tractable disposition, is still primitive in his propensity to swift moods of wrath and sudden lust of revenge, especially when under the influence of the vile liquor which many of these *pulperos* sell. The law of the land, recognising the danger of his passions when aroused in love or war, forbids the carrying of revolvers and other lethal weapons; but this is one of many well-meant statutes which never has been, and apparently never will be, observed in the "camp." Every peon carries a *cuchillo* in his belt, a formidable blade which he uses in his daily work for every conceivable purpose—for cutting of his meat, skinning dead beasts, and cutting wood. Drawn in anger, it is a murderous weapon and responsible for more casualties than firearms. Revolvers, too, are plentiful; it is safe to say that every man has one, who does not wear the belt and knife. Police *comisarios* and *rurales* carry them, and are as quick at the draw as any Texas sheriff; postmen, *pulperos*, and men whose business involves the carrying of money, all go armed. So that at races, and *remates*, at *ferias* and places where they drink, there is always the possibility of a sudden fusillade and funerals to follow.

The peon's holidays are few and far between. From Monday morning till Saturday night, all his hours of daylight are spent in strenuous labour; and his choice of Sunday amusements is generally limited to those of a celibate community—horse-racing and cards and drink—none of which is calculated to ease the strain of existence

ır to bring balm of relaxation to his restless soul. In the pring, what time the lapwing gets himself another crest ınd we live luxuriously on plovers' eggs, the young Oriental's fancy turns lightly enough to thoughts of love, ɔut here his opportunities for toying with Amaryllis in he shade are lamentably few and unsatisfactory. In the ife of the " camp," things being as they are, Amaryllis is ɛither vexatiously unapproachable, or so easy of access ıs to be undesirable, *pour le bon motif*. Somewhere in the ıeighbourhood of every *estancia's* community of celibate ınd sentimental peons, there are *puestos* of dubious, if ıot ribald, reputation, inhabited by daughters of the ıorse-leech [1] without visible means of subsistence, who ıevertheless do live and thrive, and this without much ɔcandal. These, the female servants of the neighbourıood, and the marriageable virtuous daughters of a few amilies—generally colonists—are the stars on the peon's ıorizon of romance. Marriage is unpopular amongst hem, and generally regarded as superfluous, for reasons o which I have already referred; often, therefore, the ɔhysical and moral state of the peon suffers inevitably rom his enforced celibacy, tempered by draughts of the Circean cup. Not so much, probably, as in the case of ɔailors and soldiers, or other groups of young men comɔelled to live under unnatural conditions, but manifestly ɔo, nevertheless. Small wonder if, every now and then, Pedro, having borrowed or saved a few dollars, throws up ıis job and rides away, seized by a *wanderlust* of sharp-set lesires, in search of romantic adventure and the fulfilment ɔf dreams. His quest may end, with his money, at the irst *pulperia;* but it may lead him as far as Mercedes, to ɛevel in the fearful joys of picture-palaces and *bailes* in

[1] The generic term applied to this class—its origin is doubtful —is " Chinas."

that bewitching spot, to strut his little hour on a stage, not wholly hopeless of Romance, and to return in due season to his *compadres* with tales of love and war, that surely shall nothing lack of imagination in the telling.

A picturesque figure, jaunty and *débonnaire,* is Pedro, when he rides forth in all his finery, either to court Dulcinea or in light-hearted quest of pleasure. There is silver, brightly shining, on his saddle-bow, stirrups and whip; his saddle-cloth is of worked leather on black sheepskin; the spurs on his crinkly Wellingtons are an inch long, making a brave clatter when he walks. In hot weather he wears baggy trousers (*bombachos*), a white waistcoat and a neckcloth of spotless white silk, tied in a graceful *négligé* that is the very pink of gay-dog-dom in the "camp." In winter he sports a poncho of ample folds and fringed edge, with the white neckcloth floating to the breeze; and a very fine gentleman of the road he looks, when thus arrayed. His sombrero, a black hat of the soft felt description, very like that which the Chinese invariably wear in California, lends a quaintly sober, almost a Puritanical, note to his appearance.

The neckcloth is not only the high note exponent of dandyism, but serves also to proclaim its wearer's political inclinations, a *panache* of party. For in the "camp," as elsewhere—

> Every boy and every gal
> That comes into this world alive
> Is either a little Liberal
> Or else a little Conservative."

Ask a son of the soil, outside of the capital, what he thinks about politics, and he will generally tell you, with a shrug of the shoulders, that he cares for none of these things; that he "inscribes himself" as a voter because

of the fine imposed if he neglects that civic duty, but that the elections concern him not. Nevertheless, every one is either a "Blanco" or a "Colorado," a Conservative or a Radical, as a matter of course, either as a matter of inherited conviction, of religious opinion, or business principles. Very few peons can give you any political reason for being either White or Red; they were born white, or had whiteness thrust upon them, and there the matter ends. But the great majority are apparently quite prepared to accept the prescriptive obligations of inveterate party strife, and if needs be, to "come out" and fight for the glory and benefit of politicians, to kill each other, brother against brother, and father against son, in quarrels of which they know neither the beginning nor the end. In the past, whenever the political leaders decided on a revolution, or in other words, on a struggle of the "Outs" with the "Ins," the peons knew that every able-bodied man would be rounded up and impressed for military service by the first troop of armed men, Red or White, that passed their way; just as every *estanciero* knew that his horses and cattle were at the mercy of wandering bands of self-appointed "liberators" or "defenders" of La Banda Oriental. As fourteen years have passed since the last revolution, which drove the "Whites" headlong into the wilderness and cut them off from the sweets and perquisites of office, the younger generation of "camp" men knows nothing of civil strife except what they learn from their elders. Also, they certainly know of nothing in the country's affairs, no profound cause of public discontent, to justify an outbreak of armed strife against the powers that be; yet all seem to take it for granted that, sooner or later, the Whites will endeavour to redress with bullets the imperfections of ballots, and that; when that day comes, there

will be no room for able-bodied neutrals or conscientious objectors.

Like the peon, I do not profess to understand the differences of principles and policy that distinguish a White from a Red; both profess the same exalted devotion to the welfare of the masses. But it is evident that the Colorados, being in possession of the till, are also in control of the army, police and other important strategic forces, and therefore, as a party, are much better organised and equipped than the Whites, even though the latter are the more numerous, and include in their ranks the big business elements (including *estancieros*) and the Church. There is no doubt that, in most parts of the country, the "camp" is far more White than Red, for the average peon feels that the Government at Montevideo is unduly given to conciliating and pampering *los obreros* of the city, at the expense of the real and genuine working man himself. His attitude of mind, in fact, closely resembles that of the Russian peasantry towards the industrial workers of the cities, an attitude of suspicion blended with contempt. Moreover, though he may not be religious, he is conservative and superstitious enough to dislike Señor Battlé's rudely irreverent treatment of the Church. So the white neckcloth is fashionable in our midst, and in seasons of drought and discontent—such as that which occurred in 1916—the man who seeks may find Caves of Adullam wherein the coming revolution is eagerly discussed. But the older and wiser men will tell you that the storm when it comes will arise from the capital, not from the "camp," and that there will be ample warning of its coming for those who use their eyes and ears; for many politicians are also *estancieros*, and these will be in a hurry to sell their stock when serious trouble is in sight.

Generally speaking, the attitude of the "camp" man

towards politicians is like that of Confucius towards the immortal gods; he declines to discuss them. His habitual conversation is chiefly concerned with his daily work, his daily bread, and horses—above all, with horses. Wheresoever two or three peons are gathered together in their hours of ease, it is safe to wager that they will either get out the guitars and make music, or that they will suck maté and talk horses. Their music is invariably sentimental and often of the deeply melancholy variety; it is impossible to imagine the *hijo del pais* singing a comic song after the Anglo-Saxon or French manner. I never listen to their singing without hearing in the distance, beyond the hills of Time, dim voices of Arabia and the East, echoes of Moorish melodies in Spanish streets, and, beyond these, the songs of Europe's wandering troubadors. I am sure that these last must have been very closely akin to the songs of our peon singers, and especially of the improvisatore minstrels of the camp

Conversation about horses comes as naturally to the Gaucho and the peon as conversation about price lists to the Jew. There are some thirty different words in common "camp" use to describe the various colours, breeds and peculiarities of horses; the man who cannot ride, recognise and discuss them all, is only by courtesy a member of polite society. The marking and branding of horses, and the precautions taken for the official registration of all sales, are even more stringent than in the case of cattle—for the horse is to the Gaucho as the ship to the sailor. On Sundays there are *carreras* all over the country, races consisting of short-spurt matches for two horses at a time, usually owners up, wherein the peon finds not only excitement and occasion for gambling, but matter for conversation and new bets for a week to come.

It is strange that a people as devoted to horses as the "Oriental" should display quite unnecessary cruelty in breaking them in to saddle and harness, but such is the lamentable fact. The match-box moralists have good reason to preach kindness to animals, because in their treatment of the beasts of the field most South Americans are systematically and yet carelessly cruel. For instance, they habitually postpone the dehorning of calves until they are ten months or a year old, making a very painful and bloodthirsty business of an operation which, if performed before the horn hardens in its socket, is simple and almost painless. And similarly with castration, generally performed at the same time as the removal of horns. Left to himself, the *hijo del pais* would prefer to perform these and other operations with the aid of the lasso, which, in unskilful or careless hands, often means the breaking of an animal's leg, and under the best of conditions inflicts needless pain upon the terrified victim.

Horse-breaking is a special profession in the "camp" and the *domador* one of its most picturesque figures; but his usual methods, combining sheer brutality with terrorism, are a disgrace to a people that professes to love and admire horses. In most *estancias* the colts are allowed to run practically wild with their dams until they are four, or even five, years old (natives declare that horses continue to grow for six years). When animals are wanted for riding or cart work, a mob is brought in to the home corral, and the services of a *domador* engaged to break them in, at about $5 a head. His first step, having selected his victim, is to lasso him round the neck; this being done, three or four men pull on the rope until the wretched beast, at the point of strangulation, with bulging eyes and loudly groaning, falls to the

ground. His legs are then tied and they put a halter on him; after which he is tied to a tree by the head and left there to pull and strain at the rope, nearly dislocating his neck and always hurting himself in the process. When he is sufficiently exhausted and cowed by this form of torture, another is applied to "make his mouth." They tie up his tongue by means of a heavy bit fastened round the lower jaw; to this a long rope is fixed and passed over his back. A mounted peon next takes the slack of the rope, and, riding off, jerks it violently, so that the victim has either to give way and follow backwards, or have his jaw dislocated. After this the animal, trembling in every limb, is saddled, and the *domador* mounts him; with a mounted man on each side to "mother" the new recruit, they then gallop him until the taming process is concluded, the *domador* pulling savagely at his tender mouth all the time. *Estancieros* will complacently tell you that in this way a horse can be completely tamed in a day!

In former days it was considered beneath the dignity of the *noblessa gaucha* to ride a mare; even now no self-respecting *domador* of the old school will condescend to tame one. The prejudice, like many others, is passing away by reason of economic pressure, and the leavening of the hidalgo tradition by each new generation of immigrants, but a mare is still less valuable than a horse. Being thus held in small esteem, her part in the scheme of *estancia* life is not an unhappy one, as this world goes; it is certainly more blessed than that of the cattle and sheep whose pasture she shares. For years she may roam the wide *potreros* undisturbed by man, without labour or care, save that which comes with her first offspring; and when, in course of time, they put her to cart work, her long-legged suckling colt is not taken from

her, but runs alongside the team all day long and snuggles up to mother to be fed at every halt. The carters of the "camp" are a remarkably knowledgable set of men, resourceful and careful of their beasts.

The peon's cruelty to animals is, I think, chiefly due to a lack of intelligent sympathy, in other words, to spiritual laziness and carelessness—a natural outcome of his way of living and thinking. In this, as in many other matters, he resembles the Chinese peasant, whose lack of mental activity, of sympathetic imagination, prevents him from realising that his buffalo's blindfold penance at the water-wheel, or the pitiful condition of his pariah dogs, represent violations of the Buddhist law of gentle kindliness. Talk to Ramon or Sancho of these things, and they will readily endorse your views; they will agree that it is shameful to inflict needless suffering on *los pobres animales*, and profess to deplore the apathetic conservatism which permits it. These things, says Ramon, "are *costumbres del pais*, customs that have grown up by long usage and thoughtlessness, and they are very hard to change. To these poor beasts, that only come into the world to be harried and worried until the time comes for them to be killed and eaten, one should be *muy compasivo*, Señor. But one sees them every day and thus one grows callous and forgets."

Ramon, the ploughman, and his peers were wont at times to discuss the news of the outside world, and particularly the war, as set forth in some Montevideo paper that had found its way to the peons' quarters. The proportion of illiterates is high in the camp, in spite of the Government's educational laws and professed satisfaction on the subject; and Ramon happens to be the only one of our seven who can read fluently enough to hold the general attention. And yet, for all their distance from

the sources of learning and culture, these men seem to me to have partaken more of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge than the superficially educated humanity of our Vanity Fairs. They seldom see a book or a play, have never been to a museum or picture-gallery, have had none to lead them even a little way towards the City Beautiful; yet I find amongst them an instinctive perception of beauty, less vulgarity, and a more natural urbanity, than amongst the peasantry of other lands. There is nothing in them of the bumpkin or the boor, hewers of wood and drawers of water though they be, nothing mean or menial about the veriest vagabond among them; but, on the contrary, much inborn refinement and natural dignity. And these things being so, what becomes of our fixed belief in the civilising value of a Board School education and a Ministry of Arts and Graces for the Masses?

When I said that most peons had never seen a play, I meant a performance of legitimate drama. The picture-palace, of course, is theirs to command, even in the smallest and sleepiest of "camp" towns, and the enterprise of Los Angeles has provided, amidst the usual muck-heap of maudlin slush, some interesting films which give the picturesque side of the Gaucho's life and satisfy his dramatic instincts; moving tales in which chivalry (with a lasso and a guitar) and virtue (Carmen of the discreetly glad eye, with a chaperon in constant attendance) triumph, after many pitfalls and perils, over the purse-proud profligate (with diamond studs, hired ruffians and a Rolls-Royce). Sometimes an enterprising owner of back-number films will make a progress through the "camp," stopping two or three days at convenient *pulperias* and circulating handbills of his performances to the neighbouring *estancias* by word of mouth or hand of

Never-Never-Land, and give some habitation to their dreams. Yet, if one may judge by appearance and hearsay, a capacity for romantic sentiment lurks beneath their demure and well-disciplined deportment; as wives, they are generally of gentle disposition and faithful; and, as individuals, of good manners, and by no means lacking in intelligence.

Because of their disposition, and the narrow limits of their lives, religion of some sort appeals naturally to the women of the "camp," easing their heartaches and satisfying their instincts of devotion, especially when their swift-fading youth has passed, and crowding cares of maternity no longer absorb their energies. But the Church has long since ceased to be militant in these parts, and the crude superstitions which linger here under the name of religion are more the outcome of oral tradition than of pious instruction. Where births, marriages and deaths are concerned, these women cling as closely to the forms and ceremonies of the Church as their knowledge and circumstances permit. But visitant priests are rare in most districts, and the cost of a christening, which may involve a forty-mile journey, is an item for which the peon's budget does not provide. Marriage also can be consummated without benefit of clergy, in case of need. But death is a different matter; here, as always and wherever men live close to Nature, the survivors' sorrow must find expression in pomp and circumstances of sacerdotal ceremony; man, for all that he may have lived unknowing and unasking anything of the gods, must go to his long home in the odour of theological sanctity. Herein, indeed, is a touch of human nature that makes the whole world kin. A funeral procession from the "camp" to the burial-ground of the nearest town is precisely the same in its inspiration and much the

GAUCHOS AT DRABBLE STATION, CENTRAL URUGUAY

"PANTALEON"—A PEON

[*To face p.* 280.

same in its proceedings as a funeral in Russia, in Central China, or among primitive peoples; the instinct which appeals for priestly intervention on behalf of the dead is universal. The "camp" woman's instinctive desire to have her children baptised—especially the first-born—as a reasonable precautionary measure against the powers of darkness, is entirely free from theological bias. If a clergyman of the Church of England should be making a progress through the "camp" (the irreverent call it a *rodeo*) from one group of *estancias* to another, a peon's wife will not hesitate to ask him *en passant* to baptise her child or children, and will heartily congratulate herself upon combining orthodoxy with economy. There was one case of the sort, I remember, where, after a dignified canon had baptised Juanna's latest (illegitimate) offspring, the delighted mother pressed a dollar into his hand, and, when he feebly demurred, exclaimed, "*Oh, tome por la copa.*" [1]

Dancing is very popular in the "camp." Nearly always on Sunday evenings, and often on other days, the men dance amongst themselves, to the music of guitar or concertina, with much punctilio and nice observance of ballroom etiquette. Chiefly they trip it in the tango and the maxixe, but they pride themselves on a good catholic taste, and have not yet reached the fashionable modern style which eliminates all rhythm and graceful movement. Like sailors, or Irish jig dancers, they take their pleasure with portentous solemnity and strict attention to scrupulous precision, especially in the tango. Ramon, dancing with Diego the fenceman, is a model of courtly dignity, and when, in movements that recall the stately minuet, they gravely bow or make a leg, they do it with all the high seriousness of artists. Some-

[1] "Take it to get yourself a drink."

times in bad weather they dance, half a dozen couples at a time, in the confined and murky space of the peon's kitchen, with a small naphtha lamp giving just enough light to let one distinguish their faces, moving in the gloom, and to enable the dancers to avoid collision with each other or the stove; but generally their revelries take place in an open space amongst the trees. They dance for the sheer love of music and movement, these sons of the soil, and I never watch them without wishing that the Sunday evenings of our stall-fed town-bred citizens might be as wholesomely employed.

It is on a wet Sunday that one learns to appreciate the native's talent for finding continual pleasure in such things, and to admire his immunity from that moral dyspepsia which the over-civilised call ennui or " nerves."

As I have said elsewhere, the son of the soil hates getting wet as much as a Chinaman, or a cat; therefore, when it rains on a Sunday, he keeps doggedly under cover. On a wet week-day the peon who is on day wages and not of the regular staff, will usually knock off work, no matter what his job or how badly he may need the pay, and wait till the clouds roll by, whiling away the hours with sleep and maté, cooking his *torta frita* and playing cards. This he will do, if needs be, for days together, and from his proud eminence of dryness pity the few regular men whose duty takes them perforce afield; that is to say, the *recorrer* peon who does the daily inspection round of the " camp," and the house-peon, who attends to the horses, milch cows and rams. The other regular staff men are usually put to indoor work in wet weather, husking maize, mending harness and other gear. The *domador* sits all day long in the doorway of the peon's kitchen, making lasso ropes and halters with strips of raw cowhide, or fashioning a saddle-cloth from

the skin of a *carpincho* (river hog). Even on Sunday this picturesque, sternly conservative old Gaucho is for ever busy with the trappings of his trade; a taciturn fellow, with grizzly hair and the long supple body of a youth, he is at no pains to conceal his scorn for all trades and traffics that concern not horseflesh, and for those *gringos* (including me) who travel in motor-cars. All the other peons treat the *domador* with the respect due to an aristocratic *esprit fort*, a dandy and an oracle (his claim to distinction under the last heading being based on a great gift of silence), so that on a wet Sunday they sit, so to speak, at his feet. From the interior of the kitchen comes a faint thrumming of guitars, and a mixed odour of *asado* and fritters. Every now and then a sleepy-looking figure will appear framed against the dark portal of the peon's sleeping-room, stretch himself, yawn, and return once more to slumber. Pedro, of course, is comfortably established in the kitchen, regaling Nicasia with the latest spicy stories from the *pulperia*. They all miss the *pulperia* on a wet Sunday, the gossip, *pelota* and convivial caña, especially as no spirits are allowed in the peons' quarters; but a man must be unusually fond of his liquor to face a ride in the rain, and the number of habitual soakers in the "camp" is small.

I was talking to Pedro one evening on the subject of drink and congratulating him on his virtuous preference for maté. Pedro, I have reason to believe, has a weakness for imparting to me as solemn facts all sorts of pleasant and edifying fictions—pulling my leg, in fact. Maybe that, in the kindness of his heart, he is trying to supply me with interesting copy. At all events, on this occasion he informed me that in bygone days he had been fond of his liquor, but that he was completely cured of it by the horrible fate of his cousin Enrique. Had I heard of it?

No? Well, he and the unfortunate Enrique were then working together—this was ten years ago—at an *estancia* up Salto way, and one Sunday they had gone with two other *compañeros* to a *carrera*. After winning a good deal of money, they had got mixed up in a *pulperia* carouse with a couple of pot-valiant Porthenos, and there was much consumption of caña. At midnight, when it came to going home, he, Pedro, refused to move, and slept till dawn under the friendly stars. But Enrique and the other two men, all very drunk, insisted on mounting their horses and starting homewards. The cool night air soon made them more unsteady than ever, and in a little while Enrique's horse stumbled at a ditch in the roadway, and off he fell. His two *compañeros* (gallant fellows both), but extremely unsteady as to their legs) managed to dismount, but all their efforts to put Enrique into the saddle again were of no avail. "What is to be done?" says *compañero* Mateo; "he can't get up." To Marco, drowsily thinking it over, there comes suddenly, in the confusion of his mind's darkness, a brilliant inspiration, born of the association of ideas, wherein man became fatally confused with sheep. "If he can't get up, nothing for it," says he, "but to cut his throat." Whereupon Mateo, unconsciously acting upon a suggestion which accorded with everyday usage in similar cases, cuts poor Enrique's throat, and the two *compañeros*, feeling that everything possible had been done to prevent needless suffering, struggled home to bed.

For professional reasons I decline to believe most of Pedro's local yarns, but the Comisario, to whom I ventured to repeat this one, assures me that it is true.

## CHAPTER XV

### TRIBES ON OUR FRONTIERS

OUR nearest English neighbours live between three and four leagues away, so that, even in these days of motor-cars, any little differences that may arise between us are seldom the result of excessive familiarity. As a matter of fact there is not as much sociability between the scattered British *estancieros* in this country as a stranger might be led to expect; what he does notice among them is their remarkable proclivity to commonplace, and often malicious, gossip, and with it a tendency to make mountains of grievance out of molehill offences and to nurse a trifling grudge until it becomes a bitter feud. These amenities of *estancia* life are, no doubt, directly due to narrowness of outlook, to lack of intellectual stimulus and distraction; they are particularly conspicuous where people have become infected with that "camp-rot" of which I have already spoken. Hospitality to the way-farer, spontaneous and open-handed, is the unwritten law and proud tradition of the "camp"; every stranger coming within the *estanciero's* gates may count upon receiving courtesy and kindness as a matter of course. But between neighbours the exhibition of these virtues is curiously infrequent; indeed, the first thing which strikes a new-comer to these parts is the pettily malicious nature of the local gossip and the incredible triviality of the causes of the disputes which disturb and divide *estanciero* society. The same good hospitable man who will open his doors and, if need be, his purse, to an

uninvited guest, will quarrel with his nearest neighbour for years over the veriest wind-blown straws of *pulperia* gossip, and thereafter behave with all the obstinate fatuity of a spoiled child. And woman, especially the imported article with pretensions to social superiority, often appears upon the scene as a very prolific sower of strife in "camp" communities which, until her coming, had lived without discord. I have known one bellicose Irish woman, lacking children, family rows, shopping, or other safety-valves, to divide all the countryside within the radius of her fierce activity into hostile camps, and keep them at loggerheads for years. In her case, strife, after the manner of Tipperary, afforded an obvious antidote to homesickness and ennui of the kind that kills. But I have known others, even women born and bred in the country, who generally know better, to sow and reap trouble from sheer wantonness of naughtiness, setting all their neighbourhood by the ears and incidentally bringing their menfolk into contempt. In the "camp," as elsewhere, many a man learns to appreciate the hoary wisdom of the Preacher who said that it is better to dwell alone upon the housetop than to abide with a contentious woman in a large room; and many a wayfarer learns to steer clear of local habitations where Xantippe rules the roost. "Camp-rot" in women sometimes takes the form of a morbid distemper of suspiciousness; I have known, *moi qui vous parle,* of one who, after dispensing hearty hospitality to a stranger for several days, and seeing him depart in peace, sent a peon riding after him in hot haste with a note from her husband politely requesting him to examine his baggage and see whether he had not inadvertently taken some unconsidered trifles which she had suddenly missed. Such acute systems of moral dyspepsia are fortunately rare; nevertheless the general social atmosphere of the

"camp" justifies the conclusion that for the good of their souls and neighbourly amenities, *estancieros* and their wives should take a change of air as often as possible. There is such a thing as gathering too much moss, not to mention cobwebs. One of the results of the prickly porcupine perversity which length of residence in the "camp" may breed in the best of men, is that co-operative initiative and united counsels amongst *estancieros* are extremely rare, a remark which applies to the Argentine as well as to Uruguay.

But to return to the tribes on our frontiers. Our nearest native neighbour is the *pulpero*, a shrewd and thrifty Boniface of Italian descent, whose house of entertainment and refreshment stands a little way off from the high-road, hard by the shed and pens of the *Local*, where, weather and circumstances permitting, an enterprising auctioneer conducts periodical sales of sheep and cattle. The parochial business done at these *ferias* somewhat resembles that of the fortunate islanders who lived by taking in each other's washing. The man who has more grass than cattle buys from the man who has more cattle than grass. *Estancias*, bent on improving the classification and quality of their stock, send hither their unfits and weaklings, to be bought by speculating *rancheros* to fatten for *consumo*. When there are rumours of fluke or foot-and-mouth disease in our vicinity, business becomes brisk at the *remate*. *Caveat emptor* is the recognised rule of the game; the vendor who can successfully dispossess himself of a "point" of infected sheep, or of hopelessly barren cows, gains the respectful admiration of his peers. *Muy vivo*, they call him—a live man—vitality in matters of cattle-dealing being estimated on principles similar to those which obtain in horse-dealing all the world over. On these occasions, the spirit of competition is judiciously

distributing centre for the district, a spot to which the peon may repair on Sundays and holidays for recreation and refreshment. In order to stimulate his craving for the latter, mine host thoughtfully provides a *pelota* court built on to the southern wall of the *pulperia*. Here, on warm days, a man can raise a very expensive thirst; but 'tis a good game, and healthy, and far less conducive to drunkenness and blood-letting quarrels than racing or gambling.[1] The modern *pulperia*, with its *estaminet* open to all comers, affords proof that either the number of black sheep in the "camp" has greatly diminished of late years or that the shepherds have grown wiser in dealing with them. For in the old days—and not so long ago, either—mine host of the wayside inn was wont to serve liquor to his customers through a barred window, his door being rigorously closed to all but a few intimates. It may be that, following our wartime example, the distillers and brewers of caña have taken occasion to adulterate and dilute the soul-warming quality of the stuff the vintners sell, for the good of the community and their own great profit. Connoisseurs of the juice of the cane certainly aver that it is not what it used to be, a fact which may account for the increased sobriety of the peon. Be this as it may, it is certainly true that in these parts the good old days of light-hearted lawlessness and playfully promiscuous manslaughter are gradually fading into the limbo of the legendary.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean to assert that the son of the soil is becoming either a conscientious objector to violence or a total abstainer. Neither would I have you believe that the average man's chance of

[1] Nowadays most wayside public-houses have *pelota* grounds, and so popular is the pastime that many *estancieros* have come to provide courts of their own adjoining the peons' quarters.

longevity has been very materially improved by the result of increased efficiency or zeal on the part of legislation, education or police. All I mean to say is that a variety of causes—no single one of them perhaps very definite or direct—have contributed to make life and limb a good deal safer than they were, let us say, in the days when the *Falcon* came a-cruising up the Paraná. The fencing in of all the country conduced, no doubt, in the first place to chasten the old-time Gaucho's soaring soul and to instil into his mind a momentary respect for the machinery of law and order; since then the steady infiltration of a new type of settler, humble tillers of the soil who own neither horses nor lethal weapons, has given him furiously to think; and finally the debasement of caña has played its part in diminishing his opportunities for hot-blooded and scapegrace encounters. The old *domador*, and Ruffo the sheep-shearer, hotspurs both of the old regime, maintain that commercialism and the love of money have killed the soul of the Gaucho, the spirit of gallant adventure and romance, even as a Japanese of the Satsuma clan will tell you that trade has slain *bushido*.

But despite the creeping dullness of an all-too-respectable world, the "camp" still retains a good deal of the rollicking *joie de vivre* which culminates in the *joie de tuer*, and a man may yet put an end to his enemy or rival, either by sudden brawl or premeditated vengeance, and escape the penalty of justice as easily as if he lived in Long Island or Chicago. The existence of a self-respecting man must necessarily be fraught with peril, in a land of fierce passions and swift revenges, so long as every peon goes about with a jealous spitfire conception of his own dignity and a lethal weapon ready to enforce it. Out of the "camp," where the hours of work are hard, women scarce, and politics no more than the rumble of a distant drum, vendettas and tragedies

are perhaps not more frequent to-day than in any other country where the value of the law for protective purposes depends upon the individual who happens to administer it; but in the small towns, where gambling dens, " China " girls, politicians and newspapers combine to lure them into paths of strife, there is quite sufficient liveliness and hazard of adventure to satisfy any gentleman in search of excitement. Dolores, our nearest town, for instance, until quite lately kept up a very imposing average of citizens slain by night and day in her streets, either in the settlement of private feuds or the adjustment of political differences. Not long ago there were three newspapers in the town, all very frank and free in their comments on men and affairs, a fact which tended to excite and promote frequent breaches of the peace. But since the editor of the " White " paper shot and killed one of the two " Red " editors in the main street and (being of the " Out " party) went to gaol for it, public opinion reflected only by one surviving journal has lost its *sauce piquante* and the undertakers' business in Dolores is not what it used to be

On the other side of the River Maciel, our nearest neighbour is Don Feliz, the *Teniente Alcaldẽ*. I have never seen this official's functions and responsibilities as magistrate, registrar or shrieve definitely laid down in any public document. In practice, his activities appear to vary inversely with the square of the distance involved, and his actions to be largely based on his own past and present relations with the parties. A worthy and a pleasant fellow is the *Teniente*, who asks nothing better than to sit for hours in the shade of his vine-covered porch and to entertain you with maté and small talk; but his conception of the duties of his position is necessarily affected by the needs of a rapidly increasing family. It is also complicated by the fact that, in many cases, he is

unable to predict to which side will incline the sympathies of those higher authorities upon whose knees lie the ultimate secrets of justice—to wit, the *Juez de Paz* and the *Jefe Politico* at Mercedes.

In matters of elemental simplicity, such as sheep-stealing or fence-cutting, where (as I have already explained) the law of the "camp" is explicit and generally effective, the position of the Comisario de Policia and of the *Teniente* is simple and the ends of justice are sufficiently well met; but not so where a man is done to sudden death in a love-affair or gambling row. For in this country, and indeed throughout South America, persons with homicidal tendencies are encouraged by the fact that they incur no risk of capital punishment, and that, as the authorities usually object to spending money on feeding prisoners, they have, if convicted, a good chance of being speedily released. On the other hand, the sentimental leniency of the law, as well as the uncertainty of its application in many districts, naturally tends to perpetuate blood feuds and family vendettas. Even in cases of theft or malicious damage to property, the injured party frequently prefers either to take the law into his own hands, or to persuade the police Comisario to deal summarily with the offender by giving him a sound thrashing and a warning, rather than to have recourse to the devious and expensive processes of judicial procedure.

Justice in the "camp," like kissing, goes often by favour. Therefore most *estancieros*, unless they happen to be of the *muy vivo* type and confident of the protection of friends at court, fight very shy of litigation, only invoking the assistance of the *Juez de Paz* as a last resource. Against the minor alarms and incursions of evil-doers they generally contrive to protect themselves, *tant bien que mal*, by ecuring the active good-will of the local Comisario in return

for a monthly retaining fee. Subsidised in this way by half a dozen *estancias*, the Comisario becomes a semi-private functionary with a regular beat, on which, for his own sake, he keeps a sharp eye open for suspicious or disorderly characters. The system works well in districts like that of Mercedes, where the *Jefe Politico* happens to be a " White " man and public opinion definitely on the side of law and order. But there are districts in which the fine flower of corrupt politics may blossom in the person of a *Juez* whose sympathies and interests lie with the dissolute and disreputable elements of society, the sort of political swashbuckler who does not mind being seen gambling with a crowd of loafers and miscreants at some low-class *pulperia*, and who probably gets the lion's share of its *cagnotte*. Under such auspices an honest or zealous Comisario is rare, but if such there be, he must needs go warily to keep his job. With wandering outlaws or notorious criminals he can deal promptly, but where local offenders are concerned, he has to reckon with the possibility that they may be his Honour's good and faithful friends, and with the further fact that the rogue and rascal element in the " camp " is by no means exclusively confined to the peon class. I know a hard-headed forty-year-in-the-country Scotchman whose motto is " Count your stock and watch your fences. If your neighbour is honest you won't want law, and if he isn't the law won't help you."

Cases have often occurred (and not so long ago either) of Police Comisarios coming directly to their place of power from gaol, a cynical and thrifty *Juez* declaring that in thus appointing them he not only saved money for the State (*l'État c'est moi*) but secured the services of local experts in criminology. Some of these experiments were quite successful, I believe, the converted sinners becoming

a terror to evil-doers; but there was one, at all events, who fell short of one's ideal of a policeman in that he habitually acted as a receiver of goods, systematically stolen from *estancias* other than those which paid him to be honest. On one occasion a neighbour of ours happening to catch one of his peons red-handed with a cartload of stolen property on the way to the Comisario's shanty, took the case in wrath to Mercedes and appealed for justice. As he discovered, it would have been cheaper to ask the Comisario how many cartloads would satisfy him, for justice, stern and unwinking, compelled him to come and give evidence at Mercedes at least a dozen times, and eventually fined him eighty dollars for defamation of character.

The *Juez de Paz* of our district is a somewhat remarkable, but by no means typical, specimen of his class. He combines in a very curious manner (he has been to England and France) surface polish of a travelled citizen of the world with the rugged *sans-gêne* of the true *hijo del pais;* and a certain jaunty sociability with sudden spasms of professional dignity. He dresses, not after the manner of the "camp," but rather after the fashion of a *boulevardier*, bowler and all; yet when he visits us, either for business purposes or pleasure, he carries no kit—not even a razor or tooth-brush—sleeps in his boots, and has never been known to ask for a bath. His *rêve éternel* (he is fond of airing his French) is to make enough money to be able to live as a private gentleman in Paris; he would far rather talk of that gay city, and his own amazing adventures of gallantry with Aspasia, Delilah and Lalage, than discuss with you the politics and prospects of the Banda Oriental. One must be stony-hearted not to sympathise with a man, politician though he be, whose job is in Mercedes and whose heart lies in Montmartre. After all, this Lothario in the wilderness is the natural product of an artificial

state of society, differing only from his compeers by a ribald frankness of lubricity, which, like his clothes, he acquired by the banks of the Seine. Pedro, Ramon and the peon fraternity generally regard him and his affectations with unconcealed contempt.

Our two nearest *estanciero* neighbours are a native and a Basque; small *estancias* both, of about four thousand acres. Of good sturdy peasant stock is the Basque, hard bitten and thrifty; he began life, they say, as a *chacrero* in a small way, and is now believed to be worth half a million dollars. A brother and his old mother share his untidy, unpretentious house; they keep no indoor servants (mother does the washing), mind their own business, and have evidently no desire to cut a figure in any kind of society. The Oriental, his neighbour, is a prodigal son, who, after eating the fatted calf, has gambled away the cow and the rest of his patrimony at the roulette wheel; his *estancia* is heavily mortgaged, they say, and foreclosure only a matter of time. His house is as untidy as an Irish farm, his fences all awry, and the air of the place is heavy with melancholy forebodings of impending dissolution. Yet Don Antonio keeps a stiff upper lip, entertains his friends with as near an approach to the grand manner as larder and cellar will permit, and talks cheerfully of importing a prize pedigree bull next season. Before long, no doubt, the thrifty Basque will absorb his foolish neighbour's estate and the prodigal's place will know him no more.

When last I saw Don Antonio the countryside was slowly recovering from a severe visitation of locusts, and he himself was suffering, with philosophic fortitude, the visitation of an official locust Inspector. A curious specimen of the bureaucracy, this Inspector, like most of his species of Italian origin, a pale and pimply youth with a pince-nez, very tight trousers and a fanciful taste in neck-

ties. A benevolent government appoints these functionaries for the ostensible purpose of advising and assisting landowners in the scientific destruction of locusts; certificates are issued to those who have duly carried out the ordinances *ad hoc*. So far as practical results are concerned, the activities of these Inspectors appear to aggravate rather than relieve the *estancieros'* burdens of affliction. Don Antonio's visitant, who frankly confessed that he had never seen a locust in the flesh, possessed nevertheless a businesslike conception of the market value of official certificates, remarkable in one so young, a marked dislike of any kind of physical exertion, and considerable skill at truco and poker. He spent a fortnight under Don Antonio's dilapidated but hospitable roof, and borrowed twenty dollars from the major-domo before moving on to pastures new.

Further beyond our frontiers, the nearer places recognisable by their scattered groups of trees clear-cut against the skyline, other *estancias* great and small stretch out in unbroken continuity up to, and beyond, the borders of Brazil. Several of the larger British-owned estates here, as in the Argentine, are the property of private companies; more than one in Soriano has been recognised by the Government as a " model " establishment, and therefore exempted from the double land-tax imposed on absentee landowners. These, naturally, give themselves airs—especially those which make a business of breeding pedigree cattle—letting their light so shine before men that the glare is occasionally painful. In the case of native-owned properties, the wealth or prosperity of the *padron* is seldom indicated by the size or dignity of his *estancia* house. Many rich " Orientals " own estates in different parts of the country, which they leave to be managed by a trustworthy *gerente* and only visit occasionally; as a rule, such

places are regarded as money-making propositions pure and simple, attractive to the native mind because of the speculative element in their business, and rarely undertaken upon a modern scientific basis or with large expenditure of capital. Therefore their *quintas* and human habitations are usually lacking in dignity and the conveniences which make for comfort; they impress the stranger within their gates with a sense of impermanence, not theirs is the abiding and comfortable restfulness which comes from fixity of tenure in ancestral acres.

This sense of impermanence of a vague and pleasantly aimless unrest, grips you in these regions of the Pampas. Your true son of the soil, always something of a dreamer, is bred with a gentle *wanderlust* in his bones; for him the abiding city has no attractions, the gathering of moss no charms. And many an Englishman has succumbed to the call of the wild and become an incurable wanderer, a genial horseback tramp. The "poor white" nomad is a familiar type in Uruguay; sometimes you will come across him doing odd jobs of usefulness in the unmistakable manner of the naval handyman, much addicted to contemplative fishing and tales of the sea; and again you will find him teaching English in an *estanciero's* family, with remnants of the Oxford manner visible in moments of expansion beneath his acquired virtuosity *à l'espagnole.*

One I have known, who travels the length and breadth of the land, with no possessions other than a horse, a spare shirt, a tooth-brush and a pipe; a very dignified and estimable man, his mind well-stocked with folk-lore and legend, who will ride up to the *quinta* at sunset, coming quite naturally out of the *Ewigkeit,* unsaddle and turn loose his horse, and take up his abode with you, as a matter of course, for so long as it may please him to do so. When the spirit moveth him, he moves; and when he goes, as

casually as he came, you feel that you have been privileged to entertain a very wise type of super-tramp, an Autolycus with the heart of a child. A useless life, you say? *Quien sabe?* A few years hence, and the record of its utilities will be much the same as that of yours or mine. And is it nothing that a man should be able to live in this struggling twentieth century in perfect freedom of body and soul, taking no thought for the morrow; that, having given no hostages to outrageous Fortune, he should not fear her slings and arrows any more than the breath of the *pampero?* Old Darrow's name is a household word from the Brazilian border to Paraguay, and many a man's slender stock of wisdom has been increased from his rich garnered store. He wants nothing in this world that money can buy, except tobacco, and this he is prepared to earn, if you so wish it, by posting the *estancia's* books, or, if needs be, by other clerkly work. But he is equally prepared to allow you to " lend " him the money—*entre amigos.*

At a *remate,* or *feria,* where people come together from all the *estancias* of the neighbourhood, you will generally find one or two of these cheerful philosophers. The atmosphere of a *remate* naturally attracts them, with its gargantuan feasting, its merry meetings of old friends, its bustle and gossip and music of guitars. There are features about an *estancia* stock-and-plant auction that remind one of Ireland; the jumble sale feeling that permeates the proceedings, combined with a very shrewd perception of the main chance by all concerned; the happy-go-lucky nature of the proceedings; their utter disregard of time and copious consumption of caña; the strange prehistoric vehicles in which family parties drive to the scene from miles around; gay blades on horseback and demure señoritas in their Sunday best. A *remate,* as a rule, is advertised to commence at 10 a.m., but the

rowd considers that it is doing very well if it rolls up by ıidday, and the time passes pleasantly, till lunch is served t one, with maté and caña, gossip, flirtation, and interminble talk. No Barmecide affair is the meal when served; o the *gringo* in their midst the cubic capacity of these camp-bred" stomachs is nothing short of miraculous. 3ut the *rematador* knows that a buyer bids generously when vell filled with meat and drink, and as its quantity is more ıotable than its quality the cost of this his ground-bait is ıoney well spent.

From April to September, when the killing of partridges ınd other game is lawful, *estancieros* of sporting proclivities ırganise shooting picnics, whereat friends and neighbours oregather. Here, again, the nature of the accommodation ınd the hospitality dispensed remind one of the roughınd-ready, happy-go-lucky ways to which one is accusomed in the wilder parts of Ireland—men and women ake things just as they come, and the best is as the worst. Chese shooting parties are chiefly confined to the Anglo-3axon element. Occasionally a Basque or Italian neighbour will join in and do his bit, but as a rule these people ınly keep a gun for desultory pot-hunting or for the lestruction of vermin, and prefer to shoot their game ıitting. Your *pukka* "Oriental" does not believe in vasting expensive cartridges on birds in flight, and as he native partridge is generally plentiful and a foolishly ıoisy and conspicuous runner in the open, the pot-hunter :an make a good bag without much trouble. Ducks also ıe can secure by stalking their feeding-grounds in the reed-girt river beds or narrow lagunas. I knew one sporting young native who owned a pair of Purdeys and boasted that he never missed a bird; he once joined a shooting-party of ours but firmly declined to fire at anything on the wing for fear of spoiling his established

reputation as a crack shot. The same young man told me that he hoped some day to see some fox-hunting in England; he thought he could show our old-fashioned huntsmen a thing or two. He would take his revolver and wait for the fox at likely places.

The so-called partridge of the Pampas is, in fact, no partridge, but a species of francolin (*Nothura maculosa*). Even allowing for the scarcity of population over vast tracts of country, and the lack of transport from these districts to the town markets, it is a mystery how this very edible bird continues to exist in such numbers as he does. For the species is less prolific than our partridge, and seems to be completely lacking in the most elementary instincts of self-preservation. When disturbed they will run, uttering a shrill piping note, and allow the gun to come within easy range before taking to flight, which seldom carries them more than three or four hundred yards. After being flushed for the second time they refuse to rise again, hiding in the long grass until pushed out or even seized by the dog. A common device of the natives is to ride them down and catch them, thus crouching in the grass, with a noose at the end of a long pole. In times of drought they perish, like all the beasts of the field, for lack of food; at all seasons, they have countless enemies to fear—hawks, owls and other birds of prey, foxes, weasels and skunks—they survive, nevertheless, in great numbers, and apparently acquire nothing of new craft or cunning from experience and a world full of perils of change. I have seen a party of five guns, without dogs, kill over a hundred brace in a morning, and only stop shooting because the bag was already more than could be consumed in the neighbourhood. In the vicinity of the railway, whence game can be sent in cool weather to the Montevideo market, birds are generally scarcer;

but even near the capital you meet Italians and French sportsmen returning by train from their Sunday outings with a pointer and a big game-bag full of partridges.

There is another bird, larger, more succulent eating and even more stupid than *Nothura maculosa*, which was once common in many parts of Uruguay, but which now is only to be found in the districts where thick reed-beds (*paja brava*) or large tracts of maize and oats afford good cover. This is the martinetta (*Rhynchotus rufescus*), generally called a partridge in the Chaco and other parts of the Argentine; a big lumbering bird about the size, and something of the shape, of a hen pheasant. In the wilderness of the Chaco this toothsome fowl may yet avert its doom, but it is quite incapable of escaping extinction in any region where man pursues it with a keen-nosed dog, for its only resource after being flushed is to lie *perdu* in the nearest cover.

Sporting *estancieros* have tried more than once to introduce pheasants into this country, but without success. After one season there remained no sign of them. Why one imported bird should increase and multiply, while another is unable to survive, is a mystery; but game birds are particularly capricious in the matter of acclimatisation. It is certainly not for lack of cover that the pheasant perishes in these parts—there may be less of it than in England, but there is more than in China, his original habitat. Nor can it be because of foxes and other bird-eating beasts, for the pheasant is a tree-roosting bird and has thus an advantage over the partridge. The climate also is more like that of his Oriental birthplace than that of Europe, and there is food in plenty of the kind that pheasants need. Yet he refuses to live here, just as the American " Bob Winte " quail refuses to live in China, and the Bamboo partridge—as hardy a bird as

ever broke shell—refuses to live in England. The English sparrow, of comparatively recent importation, is making himself very much at home here, and, like a good Anglo-Saxon colonist, rapidly ousting the pacifist aborigine, the dainty little crested sparrow of Uruguay. The first English sparrows were brought to Montevideo, they say, by an Italian emigrant as pets; as the Customs insisted on levying duty upon them, he opened the cage and let them fly.

There is good snipe shooting throughout the winter in the "camp," wherever low-banked *cañadas* make marsh lands in the little valleys. When flushed, the birds usually fly circling round and about their feeding-grounds, making their curious drumming sound as they come up against the wind. In addition to the migratory birds, there are a number of snipe that breed in the country; two or three species of duck are also permanent residents.[1]

Wild-fowl shooting is good, wherever there is marshy ground with reed-beds, throughout the winter, and very pleasant sport it is, in the bright sunshine of a June day with the air crisp and nipping after the morning frost, and the south wind blowing fresh and clean from the Pole. Teal and spoonbill are the commonest species, and the mallard is fairly plentiful. The only drawback to the sportsman's pleasure in the chase lies in the lack of consumers for his game. The peons, ever faithful to their mutton and beef, have little or no use for wild-fowl, though they will condescend to partridges. As to hares, with which the "camp" abounds, they regard them as unfit

[1] The local-breeding snipe rear two or more broods each year. They commence nesting as early as the end of July (equivalent to January with us); I have shot egg-bearing females early in August. The teru-teru (lapwing) begin pairing towards the end of June (midwinter) and are well forward with their nesting by the first week in August.

for human food. Hares must be shot, or coursed with hounds (a favourite sport at many *estancias*) because of the damage they do to the crops and to young trees; nevertheless, it goes against the grain to kill a dozen splendid big fellows in a morning and leave their carcases to be devoured of ants and *peludos* and carrion-eating birds. With the fine enthusiasm of a *gringo*, how often have I tramped home with a hare and visions of soup or savoury meat, only to find my quarry next day ignominiously reposing in the ash-pit, and to hear Nicasia (or any other cook) declare that the cats had got at it in the night. On the rare occasions when, by sheer pertinacity, I succeeded in getting the hare as far as the kitchen, the resultant soup was a very effective remonstrance against any further attempts to reform the dietary of the sons of the soil.

Old residents will tell you that there were no hares in Uruguay thirty years ago, that they were introduced as an experiment by a German named Lahusen, and multiplied with great rapidity, but that none have so far made their way to the north of the Rio Negro. For these statements I vouch not; but from personal observation I should say that only the country's periodical droughts have prevented the hare becoming in Uruguay a pest and a scourge like the rabbit in Australia. Hares need green food; even after a comparatively short *seca*, I have known them to become so weak that the *estancia* dogs could outrun them in the open, but after two or three days' rain and sprouting green grass they rapidly recovered condition.

The four-footed wild tribes on our frontiers are an interesting, but generally elusive, lot. The Pampas deer of Hudson's early days have disappeared since the introduction of wire fencing, but wherever there is timber or

thick cover on the river banks, the amphibious carpincho (*Hydrochœrus capyraba*) may be seen or heard, if you have woodcraft and patience. A strangely uncouth beast is this river hog; he looks as if he had started life with the intention of becoming a deer and then given it up and taken to the water and rooting. Very quick of hearing and fleet of foot, at the first alarm he makes straight for the water, where he remains with the tip of his snout periscoping from safe cover. All you learn of his presence is a scurrying in the undergrowth and a splash.

The lagunas and deep pools of the river teem with animal and bird life. Otters (*lobo*) are fairly plentiful, in spite of the value of their skins in the Montevideo market, for trappers are scarce in the "camp" (thank goodness!), and shooting at them in the water is useless killing, for the body sinks. Along the untimbered *cañadas*, where the stream runs between high shelving banks of loess and there is good grass in the open, there are colonies of nutrias (*Myopotamus coypu*), busy beaver families, harmless small deer that make their homes by the river's edge—warrens (with bolt-holes under water)—and at even play like rabbits on the greensward. Happy little beasts these, and until recent years generally unmolested; but now, since the number of fur-bearing beasts has become much less than the number of fur-wearing women, and because coats of nutria skins are advertised in the autumn catalogues of the Brompton Road at figures sufficient to stimulate the cupidity of our *pulperos*, and even of our peons, the slaying of these innocents has become a regular business in many parts of the country.

The native method of killing nutrias is singularly lacking in business foresight and finesse; it amounts practically to direct action, conceived in hasty greed and conducted in ignorance, of the kind which slays the goose

with the golden eggs. Instead of trapping the full-grown animals in the winter season, when their fur is long and the dams have weaned their young, the skin-hunter of these regions will dig out an entire colony of nutrias with dogs and spades whenever and wherever he can do so, exterminating the lot, regardless of age and sex, and probably spoiling half their skins in the process. The nutria at bay in his warren is a game fighter and a match for most terriers; many a good dog has been badly mauled in these subterranean fights, and some have never returned to tell the tale. The female nutria carries her young on her back, where Nature, all provident, has also placed her teats.

The skunk, like most of our fauna, suffered much diminution of numbers during the drought of 1916 throughout the Department of Soriano, so that to-day the *estancia* sees and smells a good deal less than it used to do of this interesting tribe on its frontiers. Also the fur-hunter is on his trail far more actively than before the war, so that his midnight raids on our ducks and poultry, once frequent, have become rare visitations; one may ride half a day without catching a glimpse of his bushy tail waving like a banner as he shuffles between the tufts of *espartillo*, or digs for the isoka grub. A strangely fearless and attractive little beast is the skunk of South America. Science, thinking only of the offensive nature of his defensive weapon, has named him *suffocans*, and it may be that his fearlessness is merely the courage of his concoction, that, like some people we know, he expects to get his own way through sheer offensiveness. Nevertheless, I have known of a skunk kept as a pet by a lady, that always slept on her bed, had the run of the house, and allowed itself to be freely handled, without ever emitting the slightest hint of its pestiferous secretion,

and from what I have seen of him at large, I think his courage comes, not from his gall bladder but from the heart, and that despite the odour of unpleasantness which clings to his name, 'tis a genial and lovable little beast. When you come upon one suddenly in the "camp," either rooting for food or asleep in the long grass, he displays no panic signs of fear; on the contrary, he looks you straight in the face, as man to man, and if you and your dogs molest him not, trots off unconcernedly about his own business. But if you annoy or pursue him, he will turn and advance upon you, coming straight at you with little nervous jumps and stamping angrily with his fore-feet, his tail stiff with menace. Most dogs, knowing from bitter experience the blinding power of the abominable spray which he can eject to a range of seven or eight feet, keep a respectable distance from that waving tail; those whose valour is greater than their discretion may cover themselves with glory, but not all the perfumes of Arabia can then make them fit to mix in polite society for several days. The skin of the South American skunk is not so dark and glossy as that of the northern continent, and in the summer months he often presents a skimpy and disreputable pelt, but a skin's a skin for all that in the eyes of those who collect them for the Montevideo market.

Foxes are plentiful and do a good deal of damage in the lambing season. They have their habitation amongst the holes of the rocks down by the river, and are seldom seen by day. Hares, partridges, molitos and other groundlings provide them with fair sustenance; but they seldom invade our *quinta* because, with the exception of the ducks, all our poultry—even the turkeys—roost out of reach in the high branches of the *ombú* trees. Ducks, poor things, are encompassed by many and great dangers in the "camp" especially in the days of their youth,

for a night-errant skunk will cheerfully slay half a dozen of them in one silent session, and the comodreja (opossum), who loves to frequent the haunts of men and likes to make his home somewhere in the caves, is just as blood-thirsty a killer. I have noticed that our mother ducks shepherd their broods at night close to the spot where the dogs are accustomed to sleep, hard by the peons' quarters.

The birds of prey are a formidable crew—eagles and harriers, kites and owls, carrion-feeding carancho (*Polyborus tharus*) and murdering cuervos (*Cathartes aura*). The bird of prey that hunts and kills its quarry clean, one may denounce but must admire; for, say what you will, he is a very graceful and efficient product of the sorry scheme which condemns us all to eat or be eaten, and in fulfilling his destiny he contrives to be a thing of beauty, which is more than all of us can say. On the principle that somebody must do the world's dirty work, the caranchos and cuervos may doubtless be justified, even as a rag-picker or a scavenger may claim to be a very worthy member of society; but their appearance is offensive, and if every man's hand is against them, they have only themselves to thank, for they combine the profession of scavenging with that of cold-blooded murdering of the defenceless. One of the carancho's favourite devices is to pick the eyes out of a sick or wounded sheep. In the lambing season they do great execution in this way; mother sheep being thus disposed of, her lamb becomes an easy prey. And the reputation of the cuervo is as evil as his vulture-like appearance.

There are neither crows nor rooks in all this country, which, when you come to think of it, is a strange omission in a land teeming with grubs and ticks and bugs. If it were not for a very wholesome fear of disturbing the

established balance of things, I should like to let loose a few pairs of English crows on the ploughed lands of the "camp" and watch the results. Here, when the plough is at work, gulls come in great flocks to follow it, and gorge themselves to a state of helpless and undignified repletion on the juicy isoka grub. Here again is a mystery, for these birds come as if summoned by wireless, when the plough's banquet is spread for them, even as storks come suddenly from the blue to devour locusts in Egypt. Who carries the glad tidings to the river and the sea, and how is it done? And what would happen to our ploughed land if no sea-birds came to thin the ranks of the isoka? I have seen a flock of several hundreds of gulls stuffed so full after an hour's following of a ten-blade motor plough that they could scarcely move and stood stock still, like aldermen after a feast, rolling beady eyes of plethoric contentment.

Of the many and pleasant feathered tribes on our frontier, song birds and others, it would take too long to tell, and Hudson has done it well enough. Their melodious voices and cheerful presence are not the least of the joys of *estancia* life. Of those that frequent the *quinta* our most familiar friends are the oven-bird, the cardinal, the bien-te-veo and the little burrowing owl (*Lechusa*). Never was any bird so chronically busy as the oven-bird; mud-house building seems to find him occupation and recreation all the year round. Natives will tell you, and believe, that the "hornero" (to give him his Spanish name) is a strict sabbatarian and resteth the seventh day. On the first Sunday that I tested the truth of this pretty legend there seemed to be something in it, for no work was done to any of the three nests selected for observation; but a week later all three couples were busily adding new layers of soft mud to their

homes, the sabbath and the presence of an Anglican Bishop visitant notwithstanding. The story probably arose from the fact that each fresh layer of mud is allowed to dry before a new layer is added.

Very brilliant of plumage is the bien-te-veo—one of the very noisiest members of the *Tyrannidæ* family—and very closely his incessant call, like that of the teru-teru, becomes associated in one's mind with the daily life of the "camp." Grateful, too, is the murmur of wood-pigeons at dawn in the eucalyptus trees. We have four species of pigeons. *Paloma grande,* the biggest, affords good flight shooting towards sunset, when the birds make for their roosting-places along the timbered course of the river; 'tis a fowl of excellent flavour. The smaller species, varying from the size of an Antwerp carrier to something little larger than a robin, are to be found in vast numbers wherever cultivation provides them with food; when the thistle seed ripens they descend upon it in such great flocks that one wonders wherewithal so many crops can be filled at other seasons. In the *quinta* enclosure there are generally one or two humming-birds hovering around the *belle de nuit;* great green woodpeckers are always busy among the *paraisos,* and there are vagabond bands of green parrots, swift-moving jewels of emerald and gold, that know to a nicety the range of a gun and seem to love marauding mischief for its own sake. Amongst the birds there is always something doing and life is never dull. As I sit at evening in the verandah that looks towards the sunset, and the curving wooded line of the San Salvador, the swelling vespers in the birds' dormitories on every side make very grateful, restful music, and as the last twitterings sink to silence in the dusk, I give thanks for these, the happiest of all the tribes on our frontiers.

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